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PERONNIK THE FOOL

BY GEORGE MOORE

BOY or youth, which was he? Héloïse could not remember, only that he was allowed to beg his living from door to door, everybody throwing him a crust when there was one by that did not seem wanted, and, when he grew stronger, claiming the right to send him to the well, to give him an adze to chop wood in a backyard, and to pay him for his day's work with broken meats and two sheaves of straw to lie on in a barn. Everybody's drudge, she said, and nobody taking thought to teach him a trade, not caring even to ask him who his parents were or what manner of life his was before he strayed into the village of Saint-Jean-de-Braie. A mere child of seven or eight, she continued as she sat in the convent library biting the end of her quill.

And having recalled all she had heard in Brittany of his story, her pen kept pace with her memories of Peronnik—how he had wandered out of the forest and had since forgotten everything except the forest, whither it was still his wont to return (compelled, maybe, by some homesickness) sometimes staying away for three or four days, setting the folk talking, asking each other if they had lost their Peronnik for ever. She had heard that he once stayed away so

NOTE: In my narrative of Héloïse and Abélard it is related that Héloïse wrote a story in French prose entitled Peronnik the Fool so that she might teach her son French (he had been away in Brittany for a long time and come back to her speaking Breton). But the story, had it been included in the published book, would have distracted the reader's attention from Héloïse's own story. It may be that in some future edition of Héloïse and Abélard the story will be included, but it will be easier for me to make up my mind if it would be wise to do this after reading Peronnik the Fool in print, and it is for this reason that I now offer it to the public through the medium of a review.—G. M.

long that the folk had gone forth to seek him, getting tidings of him as they passed through the fringes of the forest. He passed us by at daybreak, singing like a lark in the morning, the woodmen cried; and these tidings were enough for the searchers, who turned back, saying, We shall find him begging his breakfast from somebody, and from us he'll get the thrashing he deserves for having put us to such pains. Why, there he is! cried one, in the doorway of Farmer Leroux's house. Whereupon they stood waiting, fidgeting at their sticks, whilst Peronnik enjoyed such cheer as he could get out of a wooden bowl that all the spoons of the house had already been over. As he scraped and picked the clotted meal from the sides he talked so pleasantly, flattering the goodwife so well that she bethought herself of some crusts in her cupboard and returned with her hands full, throwing them one by one into the bowl, for which Peronnik was thankful, gobbling them up with such good appetite that a knight in armour riding by could not do else than rein in his horse to watch him.

Thou hast a hungry boy with thee, he said, addressing the housewife. And well might he be hungry, she answered, for not a bite nor a sup has passed his lips these three days or more. Which is it, Peronnik, three days or five? Peronnik held up his hand, for his fingers were his accounts. Five days, as much as that, said the housewife. And with nothing in my belly but berries, of that I am sure, said Peronnik; and the housewife began to tell the knight of the mischief how searchers had gone forth to seek him in the forest. And are still seeking him, maybe. . . . But, in troth, they are back again, having gotten tidings of him. You see them at yon house, waiting till you've gone, sir, to come hither to enquire out his adventures. So he knows the forest? the knight asked. As none other knows it, she answered, laughing, and began to tell stories of Peronnik's rambles, the knight cutting her short, saying, If he be knowledgeable in the forest paths, he is the boy I am looking for; and, turning to Peronnik, he asked him if he could tell the way to the Grey Castle. In the name of the Holy Virgin and God himself! cried the housewife, it cannot be that a noble knight like you, sir, should be going to the Grey Castle? By my faith, I am, the knight replied, if I can find it; for three months I have been seeking it, and for as many years my companions-in-arms have been on their way thither.

At these words Peronnik lifted his head from the wooden bowl out of which he was feeding, and with his eyes on the knight he hearkened, hearing that the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl were the greatest treasures the world could bestow on any man. For in the Golden Bowl, said the knight, he will find all food and drink that he may wish for and every kind of wealth. Faith and troth! that bowl is the bowl for me, said Peronnik to himself. Every kind of wealth, the knight continued, and also health, for if he eat and drink from the Golden Bowl he shall be healed, whatever his sicknesses may be; and though he may be dead, if not for more than three days, life will come back to him if the Bowl be put to his lips. What a wonderful bowl this is! said Peronnik. I would have it for myself. Well, tell us now about the Spear, good knight.

The Spear, the knight said, will destroy everything it touches. And who owns the Bowl and the Spear? asked Peronnik. Good knight, cried the housewife, you will not lead the poor boy astray? Ah! said the knight, so thou hast heard of the Bowl and the Spear. And thou too hast heard of them? he added, turning to Peronnik. And who would have heard of them if I hadn't, Peronnik answered, for I was born and bred in the forest and have often seen in the days gone the enchantress Redemonde riding by, the Spear in rest and the Bowl at her girdle. But would she ride about the forest with the Spear and the Bowl? the knight asked, and this time it was the housewife who answered him. Faith, said the woman, the sorceress would be of no high degree in her arts if she left the castle without the Spear and the Bowl, for without them she would be no more than ourselves and it would be easy to invade her castle. Thou speakest well, woman, said the knight; none can prevail against her while she have the Spear. She lays the Spear aside when she enters the castle, continued the woman. And the Bowl and the Spear sink down into a vault with a door that no key can open but hers, said the knight; and my plan is to make show to fall in with her humour and to steal her keys while she sleeps. I have heard of plans no better and no worse than yours, sir knight, from many of your company that have passed by my house asking the way to the Grey Castle, but none of them returned from thence. Thou sayest well, answered the knight; none of them returned from the castle, for none of them took counsel of the hermit of Blavet. And did you do that, good knight? asked Peronnik.

I did indeed, replied the knight; and was told by him that a hard task was before me, for out of the Wood of Deceits, he said, will come to meet me all kinds of fears and terrors, and if my heart be staunch and I do not yield to them, flowers will bend down from their stalks and sweet perfumes assail my nostrils; at the end of the vistas fair, shadowy forms will beckon me, and if I follow them they will lead me into deserts where I shall perish from cold and hunger, like those that went before me. But if I pass, as I shall pass, through the Wood of Deceits in safety, I shall meet a dwarf waving a fiery dart which burns up everything around it within twenty paces of the apple-tree from which I must pluck an Apple. If I escape the flames and get the Apple, I shall have to go in search of the Laughing Flower, but to pluck this I must beguile a lion whose mane is of living snakes. I shall wait till the lion sleeps (the snakes are for ever wakeful, but I must get the Flower); and having gotten the Flower I shall seek a passage through the dragon-haunted lake, and on reaching the thither side a fight will begin between me and the Black Man, whose weapon is an iron ball that returns of itself to the master after every throw. After that I shall enter the Valley of Delights to conquer every kind of temptation with which the Devil may assail a Christian. My courage will weaken, but it will become strong again, for I shall resort to prayers and fare onwards till I come to a river by whose bank sits a lady clad in black. She will say to me, Good knight, thou must carry me across the ford, for it is said I may not instruct thee on the hither side, but on the thither thou'lt learn from me what next thou hast to do. All these perils await me, said the knight, but I go to meet them without fear and asking no help from anybody but Peronnik, who will point out the way to the Grey Castle in the woods.

The goodwife would have stopped Peronnik from telling the knight the way, for her heart was moved at the thought that a man of good appearance and fair words should be lost to the world, which sadly needed such men, but before she could pluck the Fool by the sleeve he had pointed out the way to the knight, who at once pricked forward. Redemonde will get his life and his armour, the woman said, and was moved to pull Peronnik by the ears. But of what good to pull a fool's ears? she asked herself, and threw him instead two or three more crusts, bidding him go his way and never return to her again, for after his wanton words she hoped to see his

face no more. Of reproofs Peronnik understood nothing, but he was used to being told to go his way, and he was about to do as he was bidden when the housewife caught sight of her husband coming across the fields. In an evil humour my good man comes to me, she said, his gait tells it to me plainly; and she began to ask herself, Has he come upon a lamb dead in the fields, or has the mare cast her foal? Before any words passed his lips Leroux's eyes fell on Peronnik, and he said, Now then, my boy, my neat-herd has gone for disobedience to my orders, and thou'rt the lad I want to take his place. At which the goodwife held her peace, for the time was not one to arouse his anger further; and she bethought herself of the great rise in life this was for Peronnik.

From that day Peronnik minded the farmer's cows, the white and the brown and the black, keeping them together in the pasture the farmer told him they were to feed in, forgetful at first of the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl; stories did not stay long in Peronnik's head, and of all at the time he was in, for he had the weather to think of, and very bad weather it was at the time, the country withering since midsummer under a blue sky with never a cloud in it except the one that appeared about three o'clock every day and fled away southward, breaking Peronnik's heart, for all his heart was with his cattle. If the clouds will not gather and there be no more rain, whither shall I drive my cows to pasture? he said. There's little grass anywhere, and what there is is dry and crisped, with little diet in it. Whither shall I drive them for water? The pools that were are but baked mud, and the river that was is but heaps of hot shingle, with only a trickle round the middle rocks.

And it was as Peronnik said, the country seemed to have fallen out of its luck. Rain is our need and without it we perish, was the cry of man and beast and bird. Even when the chains of the deepest wells were lengthened the buckets came up but half-filled. The spells of the sorceress have caused this drought, for we will not worship Satan with her, the folk replied to the knights who came riding by asking to be shown the way to the Grey Castle, everyone gathering a crowd of villagers about his saddle bow crying, Let the Spear and the Bowl be raped from the sorceress else we perish. At which words the knights pricked on hastily, promising to return with both. But none returned, and the villagers fell into steady despair, saying, We are undone; we thirst in our houses and the cattle thirst in

the fields even unto death; our hens thirst, and the ducks and the geese return from their quest for water sadly; the flowers wither in the gardens, and no honey will be gathered by the bees this season. We are undone utterly if rain do not fall. We have no armour to besiege the Grey Castle, and the knights who have armour meet their fate, for whosoever has the Spear is all-powerful. Will no true knight come who, by the power of God and his virtue, will overcome the sorceress? If we pray will he come?

And the folk fell to praying till some began to doubt if God's power availed against Redemonde. See, they cried, no knights come. Hast seen a knight? they cried to Peronnik, who came by, returning with his cattle from a distant river. Hast seen a knight journeying? Never a one, he answered; the sorceress has had them all. And in the river did thy beasts get their fill? They wetted their nozzles in the leavings of the birds, replied Peronnik, for thousands of birds have come down from the woods and have drunk up what remains of the Arduzon. We perish utterly, were the words that Peronnik heard wailed behind him, if no knight come to save us from the woman in the Grey Castle. Wicked above all other women she is, Peronnik said to himself, and continued on his way, asking himself why she sought to destroy the poor folk who had no castle to live in. What have we done, he said, to merit this revenge? And what have the poor cows, who in other days gave their milk so cheerfully, done to deserve her terrible hatred? And that he might think more fully he sat himself by the roadside. Another knight comes, he said, catching the sound of hooves, whom I shall direct to his doom; for Peronnik was not without a heart. But seeing that the horseman wore no armour, he said to himself, No knight is this one.

Why now, my lad, said the horseman, reining in his steed beside Peronnik, what grief is this that sets such young eyes as thine weeping? Grief there is enough in the world for men and women, but for lads and lasses the world should be naught but songs and flowers. For what art thou weeping? I am weeping, good sir, Peronnik answered, for the witch of the Grey Castle in the wood has laid a curse upon the land. And who told these evil tidings of the lady in the Grey Castle? the knight asked. Good sir, replied Peronnik, I am but telling the stories that are told in the village. It may be that her ladyship knows none of these things, and that the curse that has

fallen is not her curse. But if no rain fall within the next few days my cows and young heifers will lie down and die and be eaten by wolves. But the wolves, too, have to drink, said the knight, and he asked whither they went for it and learnt from Peronnik that the wolves knew of pools untouched by the curse lying far away in the depths of the forest. Hearken, sir, to that poor heifer calling me from the well-head, but were I to let down the bucket again it might come up dry. I have no heart to disappoint her, nor have I heart to see her die. I grieve for my cows and for my master, who will be as poor as I am this winter if the curse be not lifted from the land.

At these words the horseman covered his face with his hands, and Peronnik guessed him to be weeping. You are weeping, good sir, he said, for my dying kine; and if the ways of the forest be not known to you I will point them out, and maybe (though a knight you are not, for you wear no armour) the witch of the Grey Castle will listen to your prayers and give back the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl, and the country be saved from famine. Alas, Peronnik, I know the ways through the forest and need no guide. Look into my face and tell me if thou rememberest me. And that Peronnik might judge him better the horseman stepped down from the saddle and, leading his horse by the bridle, stood by Peronnik, saying, Look into my face and say if thou hast not seen it before. Good sir, said Peronnik, you are the knight who stopped to watch me cleaning out the porridge bowl when I returned from the forest. For as many days as I have fingers I was in the forest with naught but berries in my belly; I was hungry; and the goodwife was bidding me away, never to come to her door again for food or lodging, for pointing out the way to you, sir. That day was a dark one for me, the knight answered, but for thee it was a bright day; for I have not forgotten Farmer Ledoux coming from his fields angry at his neat-herd's disobedience to his orders, and, seeing thee, he said, Vagrant though thou art, I will trust thee till I find thee disobedient. My luck came, sir knight, just as you tell it. Such luck as mine never came before to a hind like me, for those who were gone in search of me stood waiting at the corner of the street to beat me, as I heard afterwards. But, sir, your countenance is so rueful that I gather a great misfortune must have overtaken you.

A great misfortune truly overtook me, the knight replied; a

knight without sword or shield or lance is indeed unfortunate even amid the unfortunate. And who robbed you of your armour? asked Peronnik. Myself robbed myself, was the answer that he got, and Peronnik sat wondering, for the knight bade him keep his seat, saying that it was he who should stand. But my crippled knee forbids it, he said, and I will sit beside thee instead on this fallen tree, and we will talk, Peronnik, of the day that I rode away confident into the forest in quest of the Grey Castle. You spoke, said Peronnik, about the Wood of Deceits and the Valley of Delights, through which you would pass with your eyes closed lest lovely shapen fairies—I have forgotten what the dangers were, sir knight, but did you overcome them and reach the castle? I did indeed, the knight replied, and so came into my misfortune. I remember my cattle and would know them among hundreds, said Peronnik, but have little memory for words, yet I have not forgotten that you said that whosoever owned the Golden Bowl would find in it all the food and drink and wealth he wished for, and that whosoever owned the Diamond Spear would be master of the world, for it destroys everything it touches. Whilst driving my cattle from pasture to pasture I have often thought that if I were a knight I would go in quest of the Spear and the Bowl and save my country from the curse that the woman in the Grey Castle has put upon it, without telling my thoughts to anybody, for were a word to go forth that I was thinking such things I would have all the village laughing at me. But you, sir knight, have not joined with the village against me? Joined with the village against thee, Peronnik? said the knight. Putting a joke upon me, answered Peronnik, for it is hard to believe that you passed through all the great perils you told us of and have come back from the Grey Castle without the Spear and the Bowl. It may be, Peronnik, that thine eyes have never dwelt with rapture upon a woman's beautiful face? Your words, sir knight, are hard for a neat-herd, a stray come into the village of Saint Jean-de-Braie without a story to tell of his father or mother.

A woman's beautiful face! Peronnik repeated, and he asked the knight if all the beautiful ones were good and the ugly ones wicked. To which the knight replied that he would not go so far as to say that, but believed that a fine open countenance never foreshadowed a base soul, words that were too hard for Peronnik to find an answer for. Moreover, he was minded to ask the knight how he might know

beauty when it passed him by, if it were sinful to be beautiful, and if men were beautiful as well as women, getting from the knight the answer that beauty was not given to men and women only, but was shared by the birds and the beasts. The lowing heifer approaching us, Peronnik, is beautiful. If you were milking her, sir knight, Peronnik answered, you'd have a different word for her, for however hard I pull at the teats I cannot fill the pail. Flowers are more beautiful than grass, said the knight. Not in my eyes, replied Peronnik, for I would give all the flowers in the world for a field of juicy grass into which I might turn my kine. But great knights like you, sir, can praise milkless udders and set flowers above useful grass; hinds like me cannot think and do as you knights do, ride by on quests, turning verses as you ride about flowering meads and girls with rosy cheeks and white legs. Leaving the fallow faces and the tough skins songless, said the knight. Are there no lads in thy village whose hearts ache after rosy cheeks and white legs? There are many such, said Peronnik. But thou'rt not one of them? the knight asked. My mother may have kissed me, but I have no memory of her, Peronnik replied.

I would hear from you, sir knight, how you passed through the Wood of Deceits and the Valley of Delights. And cheated the dwarf, said the knight, who guards the apple-tree, and the lion whose mane is of live snakes. To have overcome such a beast as that you must be possessed of a great secret, sir knight, said Peronnik; for those who went before you had doubtless stout hearts, but a stout heart is not enough to overcome a lion whose mane is of live snakes. It is as thou sayest, Peronnik, for the snakes are wakeful, and when the lion sleeps a snake is always ready to awake him at the approach of danger. But I went to the hermit of Blavet, who told me how I might deceive the lion and poison the dragons in the lake; but he gave me no secret to save me from the beauty of the Lady Redemonde, who came to my saddle bow to welcome me when I reached the castle, and held a goblet of sweet wine to my lips and pressed into my hand spiced cakes on a silver salver. These I might have resisted, but not her sweet smile nor the sunny gold of her hair. But of these things thou knowest nothing, Peronnik. Nothing indeed, Peronnik replied; much more of porridge and crusts, and not enough of them at the end of a hard day's work. But for the sake of my kine and of the village of Saint-Jean-de-Braie I would have

turned my eyes from the cakes and wine and said, Sorceress, I have come for the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl. Then it may be, the knight said, that thou art the lad I am seeking. Now, sir knight, you must be mocking me, for why should a knight, even one who has trespassed, seek such a boy as I am?

Thou wouldst hear, asked the knight, what happened to me? I would indeed, Peronnik answered, and the knight said, Besides the beauty of the Lady Redemonde there was music and dancing and sweet singing and fine linen in her castle, and I dallied with her in pleasure for several days. And when the day came for me to ride round the castle ramparts, the last task through which a knight must pass before he claim the Bowl and the Spear, my will was not free to conquer, and I rode weakly at the great abyss; and myself and my horse were thrown into it, my horse being killed and myself carried a cripple to the castle, where my limbs were mended as best they might be. And since then I have had no will but the will of the Lady Redemonde, whose power over me is such that I go forth at her bidding to lure other knights, knowing well that they will fail in the Wood of Deceits or the Valley of Delights, they not having gone to the hermit of Blavet, who will tell a good and true knight how he may secure himself against these dangers.

So you, sir knight, were the only one to reach the castle? Peronnik asked, and the knight answered that the others perished in the Wood or in the Valley, some, by the aid of heart-felt prayers, getting through those places, only to perish in the desert that lay outside. Thou'lt see their bones— But shall I have to go in search of the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl? Peronnik asked. If the country is to be saved, thou'lt have to go, replied the knight; possessed of the secrets that will bring thee to the castle unscathed. For all secrets are in my power for giving save how to harden thy heart against Lady Redemonde's beauty. I have that myself, said Peronnik, so think no more of it. But while I am away seeking the Spear and the Bowl who will let down the buckets in the wells and wind them up again? Think not of thy herd but of thy country, the knight replied; thy herd matters little, for the herds of all the world will be thine if thou returnest with the Spear and the Bowl. I am but a hind, sir knight, and would be driven away from her castle. We can put knighthood upon thee, the knight said. But, answered Peronnik, I should never dare to ride through the streets of Saint-

Jean-de-Braie with a shield on my arm and a lance in my hand and a sword by my side, none of which I have had any practice with, all the boys and girls throwing things at me, saying, Lord! there goeth Peronnik, a greater fool than ever he was before. To which the knight answered that he could give Peronnik his horse only. Armour he had none, neither sword nor lance. She having taken mine from me. But, said Peronnik, I know where there is a lance and a sword and a shield and a helmet. You know that! cried the knight; well then let us go to find them. There may be no sword and there may be no shield and there may be no lance, answered Peronnik, but there's a helmet in a blasted tree on a heath. But this the knight could not believe, saying: How should a helmet have come down a hollow tree? It may be only one of Peronnik's thoughts, he said to himself, which are little considered in Saint-Jean-de-Braie; and they fared onward into the forest.

II

And through shady dells, over sunlit hill-tops, out of sight of watchers, out of hearing of eavesdroppers, the twain wandered, the knight in deep thought, Peronnik leading the horse half-forgetful of the Grey Castle and his approaching knighthood, happy in the enchantment of the forest, and at home in it even as the birds and animals.

At noon the knight dismounted, and whilst the horse grazed at tether he talked to Peronnik of the honour of knighthood and its duties, the chime of his words, of which Peronnik understood nothing, bringing sleep into Peronnik's eyes. But remembering, as he always did, that courtesy should be lacking in nobody, he struggled against the weariness that the warmth of the sunlight and the monotonous murmur of the forest imposed upon his eyelids, till the knight's talk became in his mind a green and golden mystery, full of vague sounds, with somebody talking whose voice Peronnik had heard before in the streets of Saint-Jean-de-Braie, but whose name kept slipping from his memory, try hard as he might to remember it. And this was the last that Peronnik heard of the pardoner, who had stopped in front of the knight to rest for a while, the afternoon being hot and his pack heavy, and who, sitting on a fallen bole, had fallen to deploring the evil times, saying that he had traversed many

villages without selling a single relic, and in a country renowned for its piety. And this pause of faith among the peasantry he set down to the drought, for having addressed themselves to God without avail, the peasantry were now offering prayers to the Devil every evening in the village of Saint-Jean-de-Braie, a favourite retreat for worship being a dusky garden or orchard. On the knight asking the reason for these conversions, the pardoner said that the folk had put aside the priest, saying that the same power could not be the creator of both good and evil. He had often heard mutterings among the crowd that collected about him: God is deaf; the Devil may have a readier ear to our prayers. He and the priest, though often at variance, were agreed that Devil-worship was of all sins the worst, and they had striven against the heresy. If he had had some relics of the evil one, some clippings of the hooves and a few bristles or hairs from his hinder-parts, he could have driven a fine trade in Saint-Jean-de-Braie in these days of drought. But neither Satan nor Beelzebub nor any of the inferior fallen angels had abided on earth, so there was little of their bodies that he could collect; smells there were in plenty, but smells could not be collected. Moreover, he was not one of those who turned their backs on their benefactors. He had thriven in the belief that God was the creator of both good and evil and in this belief he would abide, selling only relics of the saints and holy men and women.

On these words the pardoner broke into an extraordinary enumeration of his wares, laying special stress on a bit of the sail of St Peter's boat. And this not proving a temptation, he displayed teeth from the jaws of nearly all the Apostles; and as these did not tempt the knight he continued his prattle unavailingly till he produced a bunch of feathers plucked from the cock that crowed the morning of the day that Christ died, adding happily that any one of these would keep the wearer safe from the curse of the sorceress in the Grey Castle. Now is this true what you are telling me? the knight asked; shall my thoughts be safe from her, for she is a great reader of thoughts? As long as you wear this feather your thoughts will be your own, the pardoner replied; and he picked the finest feather from the bunch and gave it to the knight in return for a piece of money. And then strapping his pack together he departed quickly, leaving the knight in a pretty humour of smiling satisfaction, for what he feared more than all else were Redemonde's eyes.

But they will read no more from me, he muttered, for this feather I shall wear in my bosom. And calling upon Peronnik, who did not answer, the lad having rolled over asleep under a holly, he kicked him up and bade him lay his hand on the bridle and lead on to the hollow tree where the needed armour was hidden. Is our way to the right or to the left, to the west or to the east, to the north or to the south? the knight asked. Such questions as these Peronnik could not answer, and the knight, angered by his dulness of wit, was about to bid him away from him back to Farmer Leroux to get beaten for his neglect of the herd. But before he could speak the words, like one bidden from within, Peronnik seized the bridle of the knight's horse, and they went forward till evening, seeing only hawks at hover above the tree-tops and foxes slinking through the underwood. Only hawks and foxes have we seen, said the knight, since we started forth this morning, and Peronnik answered him that in all his forest faring he had never seen before the trees they were among. Nor this boulder, he said, nor yon stunted pines; it is not my forest but another. And the knight was about to lay his lance about Peronnik's shoulders, but kept himself from doing so lest he should run away; and Peronnik could easily outstrip him by dodging from tree to tree, passing under the thick bushes and round rocks where a horseman could not go. And were this to happen, he said to himself, I am lost indeed; Peronnik is my chance to escape from the forest.

And as courtesy is always better than hard words in such circumstances he spoke encouragingly to Peronnik, who fared on at hazard till the night was near upon them, when he cried out, Sir, yonder are three ravens just come up from the rocks. Yes, the knight replied, I see three black birds of ill omen in the air. Not so, answered Peronnik, this evening the ravens are birds of good omen, for their way is to their roosting-tree, and we have but to follow them to come upon the buried armour. Nor had they fared far when Peronnik began to remember the part of the forest he was in, and he begged the knight to take courage, saying that they were within a quarter of a league, or less than that, of the helmet he had heard the birds speak about. And the knight, putting confidence in Peronnik's wood-lore, fared onward with him in silence until the evening star burst into flame in the heavens and the tree was before them with the three ravens on its branches. It was from them, said

Peronnik, that I heard of the armour hidden in the tree. So thou hast told me already, the knight answered; but what knowest thou of the talk of birds? More than you think for, sir knight, for there is a raven in Farmer Leroux's yard that speaks as plainly as you do; when he has hidden anything he goes hopping about, crying to us, Look here, look there, look everywhere, and the very same words I have heard the ravens in yon tree speak before tucking their heads under their wings. Now give your ear to them, sir knight, and what I tell you you will hear.

The knight listened to the chatter above in the branches, but he could not divide it into words for a long time, and once more he began to think that Peronnik was fooling him; all the same, he could not do else than listen to the birds. Now, sir knight, Peronnik whispered, tell me what you think you hear; and the knight answered, Methinks I hear one bird say, Look here, and the next answer: Look there, and the three cry together: Look everywhere, for the—Helmet is in the tree, Peronnik whispered; put your hand to your ear, sir knight. The knight raised his hand, hearing this time, so it seemed to him, the word helmet in the birds' talk. It may be as thou thinkest, Peronnik, that we are within reach of what we need to win the Bowl and Spear from the sorceress. So now up with thee into the tree; as easy to climb it is as any ladder, and I will hoist thee into the first branches.

With a great clatter of wings and hoarse cries of anger the ravens flopped away into the forest, and Peronnik, reaching the hollow bole, looked down into it, crying to the knight, who waited below for tidings, The ravens have not lied to us; a helmet there is in the tree, and it being no more than six feet from the ground mayhap the rest of the knight is underneath it. Now why should the knight be underneath it and how could he be? asked the knight. None but a fool could think to find a live knight in a hollow tree. To which Peronnik replied, If he be not a live knight he must be a dead one. Thine answer is worthy of thee, said the knight, for a man is always alive or dead; and the helmet may have fallen from the knight's head as he looked down into the tree for buried treasure, to be caught midway. It may be that, answered Peronnik, or something worser, it being in his mind that the ravens would not trouble much about a steel helmet. Now what meanest thou by something worser? And the two began to dispute together, the knight trying to

persuade Peronnik to go down into the tree after the helmet, and Peronnik answering that if he did he might not be able to climb out of the tree again. Nor would you, sir, be able to lend a hand to get me out of the hole. My lame leg, it is true, replied the knight, unfits me for climbing. Whereupon they were friends again, with the knight taking advice from Peronnik, it seeming true to him that they would have to go to work with adze and saw to get the whole of the armour, if the whole of it—helmet, sword, shield, lance, and chain surcoat—were hidden in the tree. If you will remain by the tree, sir knight, said Peronnik, I will go whither I think I can buy an adze and saw; a hammer, too, it will be as well to bring. But without money thou'lt not be able to buy these things, the knight answered, so I will give thee money for them and for the many other things that we shall need, among them a leathern coat to wear under thy surcoat of mail; and to escape the several dangers that beset the way to the castle, to overcome the spells with which Redemonde has surrounded herself, thou'lt need a linen bag, and let it be filled with larks' feathers—not sparrows, but larks, to be sure; some bird-lime, too, and a garland of roses—forget it not, nor a pipe made out of a stem of elderwood. These things come to my mind readily, but others will be needed, and I will tell them to thee and impress them upon thy memory as we journey to the village. Which is not far, Peronnik interjected. It will be well indeed that you accompany me thither, for— That I should go with thee, Peronnik, is a thought that has been in my head while speaking to thee. It's a good thought, too, for who would believe that I had gotten so much money honestly as you will have to give me? cried Peronnik. What story could I tell them, and of whom should I tell it? My name, said the knight, is Sir Gilles de Lacenaire.

Sir Gilles' straightforward speech reassured Peronnik, and he kept pace beside the knight's charger all the way, now and then clinging to the stirrup leather. And in this way they came into the village, where they were followed by eyes open with admiration, Sir Gilles' martial bearing overawing the women and children, the men, whose shrewdness might have led them to ask what business brought a knight and a shepherd lad to the village after sundown to buy saw and adze, being away in the harvest fields. The larks' feathers, the bird-lime, the pipe made out of elderwood, and the garland of roses awakened astonishment, but it was enough to remember that knights

were not as other men. And so favoured Sir Gilles and Peronnik returned to the heath with all they needed, and once arrived they came to their work without delay on the blasted tree, putting to flight the ravens, who had returned thither. We are well rid of those croakers, who have tongues in their beaks to tell all they see and hear, said Peronnik. Thou art not the fool that I thought thee, Peronnik; a mind is awaking in thee. And without more words Sir Gilles dealt the hollow tree some great blows with the adze; but the tree was tougher than they thought for and yielded but little. Our work will take us till daybreak, he said, and spat upon his hands to get a better grip of the slippery handle. Peronnik worked with chisel and hammer, and when he and Sir Gilles stopped to take breath they saw the moon rising into the pure summer sky, sending long shadows of the tree over the heath. It may be that the evil birds are roosting in yonder wood and watching us; if so, it would be well to drive them out of it, said Peronnik. On this errand they went and drove the ravens further away lest they should have the story to tell to whomsoever might listen to them in the morning; and hearkening from time to time to birds winging their way high overhead to some pool or mere known only to themselves, where they would stay till morning, and to the footfalls (foxes and badgers, mayhap) they plied adze and saw. Once the tread was heavier, and Peronnik whispered, A bear. My horse, said Sir Gilles, has winded him; and they clung to the horse's bridle, striving to quieten him with words, but he plunged out of their hands and nearly broke his tether. If we had lost him! Sir Gilles muttered, leaving the rest of his thought to be spoken by Peronnik, who said, It would be a bad luck indeed if we were to lose our horse now, for if the morning light makes a knight of me I must have a horse to take me to the Grey Castle. And if we had lost mine, where should we have found another? Sir Gilles asked, for all my money is now spent. If that be so, said Peronnik, we would do well to light a fire, for if wolves be about (and there's no reason why they are not on the prowl) your horse will break his tether; there is naught that a horse fears like the smell of a wolf. Thereat the twain set to work to build a fire, and having done this they returned to the tree and worked for another hour or more.

We are just on daylight, said Peronnik, and when Sir Gilles asked him how he knew that daylight was nigh, Peronnik pointed to the

stars, saying, They are no longer near us, Sir Gilles, for they follow the night; and he asked Sir Gilles if he did not feel a chillness in the air. Sir Gilles answered that the sky was greyer, and Peronnik pointed to a heron flapping through the greyness on his way to the reeds that the ducks had left for the corn-fields, where he will bide all day. All the noises of the night have ceased, Sir Gilles said, and they fell once more to their work, chopping and hacking and breaking the old tree away in parts, without, however, being able to widen a hole big enough to allow the tree to be searched to the roots. And it was not till the line of the forest began to show under a streak of green sky that they discovered a skeleton in armour. So it was the smell of the corpse that drew the ravens to the tree, said Sir Gilles. And the birds mighty angry at not being able to get a bite out of him, Peronnik answered. Are we on the spot where some foul murder was done and the body hidden in a hollow tree? Sir Gilles said, speaking more to himself than to Peronnik. Or the knight may have climbed into the tree to take counsel from the ravens and toppled into the hole, answered Peronnik, and once down in it, it would take a chimney-sweeper, and the best in France, to get out again. It may be as thou sayest, Peronnik, and weighed down by his armour he perished. We all perish, said Peronnik, one way or the other, leaving our goods behind for another's use and benefit, maybe for an enemy's. The armour we have gotten is of more worth than thy moralities, Peronnik. Now into it. Upon thy head I place the helmet and over thy shoulders the mail surcoat reaching to the waist. Thy shoon are stricken, but thy excuse to the lady of the Grey Castle will be that thou hast been long on thine errand.

With his sword by thy side and his shield on thine arm, kneel before me, and with a blow of my sword I will dub thee Sir Peronnik, and bid thee arise to start on an adventure in which many have fallen but in which thou'lt win renown. Hie thee into thy saddle, and as my broken knee does not allow me to walk far I'll seat myself behind thee, telling thee how to manage the charger, how to turn him to the right or to the left, how to rein him in, and how to escape the spells with which thy way will be beset on entering the Wood of Deceits and the Valley of Delights. To escape the dangers of the way I can help thee, but the greatest danger is the sorceress, and from her spell the purity of thy heart will save thee. It was then her beauty that caused your downfall, Sir Gilles? To which Sir

Gilles answered furtively that it was the man within him that yielded to the wiles of Redemonde. Then there is no danger for me, Peronnik replied, for the man is not yet born within me. But I would hear of the wiles and the spells she casts upon the knights. The spell of her beauty, answered Sir Gilles, which is everywhere, in her hands, in her hair, in her eyes, in her foot; at which Peronnik was perplexed. But if you know not, sir, how the knights were beguiled, you can tell me what spell she cast upon you, for you are a true and valiant knight and must have yielded to some mightier force than her foot.

The traps, Sir Gilles answered, that the sorceress sets are manifold, and she never sets the same trap twice. But before telling of the trap in which I was caught, it behoves thee to hear that the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl were brought from Palestine in a ship by the Crusaders; and that tidings of the argosy were wafted to a great magician in Italy, Rogéar, brother of the sorceress Redemonde, who by his spells called the vessel on the rocks, thereby possessing himself of a talisman that gives him power over the whole world. And how is it, asked Peronnik, that Rogéar has yielded his power to his sister? He has not yielded it, Sir Gilles answered, for they share it together; sometimes the Spear and the Bowl are in France, sometimes in Italy; at which answer Peronnik was perplexed and subdued. But brightening a little, he said, Well, Sir Gilles, tell me of the trap that laid you low, to which Sir Gilles answered, She invited me first to a great feast, and after we had eaten and drunken she called me to her side, and, having confidence that my prayers would save me from the snare of her beauty, I gave ear to the lulling music of her voice, till in the middle of a story a great noise was heard—voices in the courtyard of the castle and afterwards trampling of feet on the stairs. My brother, Rogéar, has returned, she said, and if he finds thee with me he will kill thee or change thee into some animal shape. But I love thee and will not open to him, and he cannot enter against my will, my spells being as strong as his. And myself, unsuspecting that the tumult and Rogéar's voice was but an enchantment of the senses wrought by Redemonde herself to bring me to her purpose, shook with terror, half smothered by the stench of the Devil behind the door. At last hooves were heard departing, and we stood waiting till we could bear it no longer, and fell into each other's arms, my mouth upon her mouth.

I know not how the other knights were undone, but I was undone by the lifting of the dread that followed after Rogéar's departure. But let not my downfall dishearten thee, Peronnik, for thine innocence will cast a shield over thee. I shall be near thee, and though I know not all the snares she will set I can divine most of them; and when the snare is set for thee I will awaken thee by the shuffle of my feet, by a cough, or by words suddenly addressed to her. Many victories, however, will have to be won before thou reachest Redemonde. Yonder is the Wood of Deceits, through which thou'lt have to pass; and here we part. At these words Sir Gilles slipped from the horse's quarters, and with his hand on the bridle he sought in his memory, afraid that he had forgotten some danger that Peronnik would meet on his way to the castle. But in his thoughtfulness his hand loosened on the bridle and the horse sprang forward, and no sooner were the first trees passed than the predicted dangers began to appear, and Sir Peronnik could think of no better way to save himself from the allurements of the flowers than to pull his visor over his eyes, in this way shunning the danger of sight. But the delicious scent of the flowers penetrated the woof of his armour, causing him to reel in his saddle, and he said, I must draw breath through my mouth, and he rode through the wood in safety till he came upon a great plain on the thither side littered with the skeletons of many men and horses and pieces of rusty armour. The bones of those, said Sir Peronnik, who were beguiled by visionary hosts, so Sir Gilles told me, images of beauty to which my eyes have never been opened, and to which I hope my eyes will never be opened; for beauty must be in itself a gift from the Devil, since those who have it are wicked. Redemonde has it and she is a sorceress, and girls in the village that have it are often good for naught but decking themselves with ribbons, whilst those who have it not sit in the cottage doorways spinning their lives away in loneliness. Beauty therefore cannot be else than a gift from the Devil, since no good comes of it. From the beasts in the fields I learn the same lesson; the cow that gives but two pints of milk daily found more favour in Sir Gilles' eyes than the cow that gives two quarts. But what did he say? That beauty drew the world together, meaning thereby that without beauty the world would come to an end. But is that so?

And Sir Peronnik bethought himself of the spring season, which

is always a season of bleating and lowing in the fields and singing in the woods. The ram and the yoe, he said, know naught of beauty, nor the birds in the branches, so it is not beauty that draws the world together. At that moment his eyes caught sight of two butterflies on love's quest high up in the blue air, and he said, Even the insects are drawn together, but not by beauty, for if I know little of beauty the butterflies must know less, for a fool is wiser than an insect. The beasts and the birds, and for aught I know, the fishes, he said, come to no harm, likewise monks and nuns; but not the good knights in search of the Bowl and the Spear, every one of whom has fallen, even Sir Gilles.

Sir Gilles had told him that though many had failed to get the Spear and the Bowl from the sorceress a pure knight would get them, one who had never looked yearningly into a woman's face nor sought a woman's kisses, if such a one could be found. Sir Gilles thought that he, Peronnik, was such a one, for he had strayed out of the forest without knowledge of his father and mother. Never before had the thought come to him that his father and mother met as all things that fly or walk, crawl or swim, meet, and that if his father and mother had not met he would not be. Only by the recovery of the Spear and the Bowl would God's purposes be justified. For God's ends he had come to be, and for God's ends Nature's secret was withheld from him. Would he live and die without knowing it, or would the knowledge that all possessed but he fall upon him suddenly? Let it not fall, he prayed, till I reach the castle and wrest the Spear and the Bowl from the sorceress. Till then, Holy Virgin, let me be without the knowledge, and, if it be your will, for ever afterwards. And as he rode he prayed to the Virgin for help, vowing himself to honourable chastity, saying, Let all be as you will it, Lady of Heaven; you'll be my guide now and for ever, he said, raising his eyes.

At that moment a scream hoarser than that of a sea-crow interrupted his meditation, and he saw a fair green meadow with an apple-tree in the middle of it. The very apple-tree, no doubt, said Peronnik, from which Sir Gilles told me I must pluck the Apple; and there is the dwarf preparing to launch his dart at me. So he doffed his helmet, and the dwarf, who was not accustomed to such courtesy, hesitated, and Peronnik had an opportunity of addressing him. Let me pass, dear little friend, he said, for I am the new bird-

catcher that my Lady Redemonde has engaged to snare the birds that are robbing her garden. She has told you of my coming? She has told me nothing about it, said the dwarf, and I read a lie on your face. If you continue to flouish your dart, good sir, my horse will rear and throw me, but if you'll lay it aside and come hither you will discover the Lady Redemonde's crest on the accoutrements that my horse wears. And these words seeming fair to the dwarf he laid aside his dart and examined them, and finding the Lady Redemonde's name engraved upon them he began with a changed mien to ask Peronnik if he had brought the bird-lime with which to catch the birds that infested the apple-tree. You must think me a fool indeed to come without it, answered Peronnik, and alighting from his horse he began to smear the branches; and when this was done, pretending that he needed the dwarf's help to hold the end of the twine out of which he was weaving a snare, he said, Put your head into the bag, good sir. And the dwarf, being now unsuspecting, did as he was bidden, and as soon as the bag was over his shoulders Peronnik tied the snare up so tightly that the dwarf could not scream. His struggles grew fainter, for the holy water in which the bag had been dipped kept the knot tight, and Peronnik had time to pluck the Apple and ride on his way.

It was very soon after leaving the meadow and the apple-tree and the dwarf dead beneath it that Peronnik found himself in front of a beautiful garden, in which were roses of all colours, and he said to himself, This is the garden in which the Laughing Flower grows; but how shall I pass the lion with the mane of snakes? And well might he ask himself that question, for he had barely reached the garden gate when he was met by a great lion with all his snakes hissing furiously. But courtesy, said Peronnik, is never lost, even upon a lion; and doffing his helmet he addressed himself to the lion with fair words, asking the beast after himself and his family, and begging to be directed forthwith to the Grey Castle. Now what do you seek in the Grey Castle? growled the lion, and Peronnik answered, I am the bringer of the gift of a pasty of larks for my Lady Redemonde. Larks! said the lion, licking his chops, I have not tasted larks for many hundred years. Have you any larks to spare? Plenty, said Peronnik, for this sack is full of larks; and he began to imitate the twittering of larks, which he did so well that the lion was deceived. Look in and see how many larks there

are, the lad said, opening the sack. The lion thrust his head therein and Peronnik drew the cord tightly, just as he had done about the dwarf's neck.

After plucking the Laughing Flower Peronnik rode to the dragon-haunted lake rejoicing, and seeing no bridge whereby he might cross it, he drove his horse into the water, saying to himself, *Horses swim very well and as good as a boat mine will be to me.* Nor was he deceived in this, for his horse bore him as well as any boat. But half-way across the lake the dragons began to swarm about him with gaping jaws, unable, however, to swallow him, for when their jaws were about to snap him up Peronnik plucked a rose from his garland and threw it down the black gullet; and immediately after swallowing the rose the dragon turned over and sank to the bottom, just as Sir Gilles had told him, advising him, however, never to throw a rose vainly; every one he threw must find its mark, for the dragons were very plentiful in the lake.

After crossing the lake Peronnik came to a valley which was guarded by a Black Man armed with an iron ball, who was chained by his feet to a rock. A terrible monster he was, with eyes all round his head, six of them in number, so that it mattered little on which side Peronnik stood, for the Black Man could see him; and he remembered that if the man's eyes fell upon him he would fling the ball before Peronnik could say a word. So dismounting Peronnik crept up, and hiding himself carefully behind bushes and rocks till he was within a few yards of the Black Man, he began singing the Church Service. He had not reached the end of the Introit before one of the eyes fell asleep, a couple more closed at the Kyrie, another began to wink when he was half-way through the Credo, and by the time he had reached the Magnificat all the eyes were shut.

And after assuring himself that the Black Man was sound asleep Peronnik led his horse through the Valley of Delights, in great perplexity, it is true, for along the pathways were tables, and the savoury smell of the meat and wine rose to his nostrils, tempting him. But Peronnik knew he could overcome these temptations, for Sir Gilles and himself had eaten well of the food purchased overnight. More than of gluttony he was afraid that the sense he lacked might be revealed to him suddenly, and that with increased knowledge he might become prone, like his predecessors, to the temptations of the maidens who beckoned and called to him from

the stream in which they were bathing and from the trees under which they danced. Come and join us, they cried; and their shapes and voices were so soft and sweet that the thought came to Peronnik to tether his horse and mix with them; but he invoked all the saints of Brittany to his help, and the faint thought passed out of his mind altogether when he made the sign of the cross, which he did again and again. But in spite of his invocations and his signs his horse's hooves went slower and slower till he bethought himself of dismounting and cutting a bough from a tree to belabour him with. If he had done this he might have fallen a prey to the maidens, for they continued their beguiling dances through the mazy ways of the gardens and the orchards in front of him all the way to the castle. At every step his horse took the voices seemed to grow sweeter, and to escape from the temptation (which was not really upon him, but which might fall upon him at any moment) he began to play on his pipe of elderwood; and to save his eyes from looking at the maidens' shapes he fixed them on his horse's ears steadfastly, and was able to pursue his way in safety through the Valley, the most dangerous of all trials except the sorceress herself.

On emerging from the Valley he came upon the Ford at which the Black Lady, of whom he had heard from Sir Gilles, sat, and though her face was dusky yellow, like that of a Moor, he offered to carry her across the river. I thank you, good knight, for your courtesy, she said. All your companions fled from me. I am sorry, Peronnik answered, that my companions-in-arms should have been lacking in courtesy. Then the lady mounted before him and they went into the water together, and when they were midway in the stream the lady asked Peronnik if he knew who she was. Not I, said Peronnik, but by your mien and raiment you would seem to be a noble and mighty lady. Noble I may be, for my race dates from the fall of Adam, and mighty also, for all the world would retreat from me, all except you, sir knight, in whose heart there is still innocence. Know, sir knight, that I am the Plague. At which words Peronnik sought to draw himself away from her, and was about to throw himself from his saddle into the stream when the lady said, Fear nothing, for the one I am seeking is not you, sir, but the sorceress Redemonde, who, though immortal, will become subject to death if she eats of the Apple which you plucked from her tree, grown from a seed of the Tree of Good in the Garden of Eden.

Let her taste of that Apple and I have but to touch her and she will die at once. But how shall I find the Bowl and the Spear? asked Peronnik, for I hear she keeps them underground in a vault to which there is no key. The Laughing Flower, said the Plague, can open all doors and make bright the darkest corner in the world. Well, said Peronnik, I will do as I am bidden, and if I can get you the sorceress's life you shall have it.

III

Now whilst Peronnik was performing the aforesaid great deeds Sir Gilles lay in very direful plight beneath an oak-tree in the forest, unable to move by reason of his broken or disjointed knee, which he had forgotten whilst giving last instructions to Peronnik, holding on as he talked by the stirrup leather. His last words to the new knight were that he must hold himself forbidden from any food or drink that might be offered to him in the Grey Castle. And these words had barely passed his lips when the horse began to plunge and to strike out with his forelegs, and to escape the dangerous hooves Sir Gilles loosened his hand on the bridle. A moment after the Wood of Deceits engulfed Peronnik, and Sir Gilles set out to walk to the castle, distant about half a league, he judged it to be; far too far for him to walk, as his knee soon began to warn him, till at last he could not do else than fling himself upon the ground, overpowered by the pain.

As the pain in his knee dwindled thoughts began of Peronnik arriving at the castle before him, for the lad would not succumb to the singing of the maidens—he was sure of that; but his youth, while protecting him from some temptations, would leave him more susceptible than a man to those of the fruit and honey cakes that the sorceress would offer him; the cups of sweet wine, too, she would raise to his lips might tempt him after his long ride. And were he to yield a search would be begun for the lost Sir Gilles at once, who, when he was found, would be brought back to the castle and laid by the heels in some dark dungeon amid damp and rats, for the sorceress was without mercy for those who sought to thwart her. Peronnik would be exalted in his place (a poor exaltation!) for when she was weary of him she would send him, just as he was sent, to beguile other knights to their doom.

All seemed lost to Sir Gilles till he remembered the plume from the tail of the cock that crew after Peter's third denial that he knew not Christ, a relic so powerful, the pardoner had told him, that it would protect his thoughts from Redemonde's knowledge, though he were in the sorceress's presence, and himself from any danger he might find himself in. But the forest would be searched and his relic taken from him if he did not reach the castle before Peronnik. Need brings a man courage, he said, and climbing to his feet Sir Gilles started on the journey, but had not gone far when the pain again brought him to the ground; and searching in his bosom for his relic he drew it forth and besought Jesus, reminding him that he had never doubted his power to be above that of Satan. Help me in this great extremity, he cried, and the words had barely passed his lips when his eyes were directed to a broken branch that he had not seen before, and out of which an excellent crutch could be made. It lay some little distance away, and while dragging himself slowly to it he prayed with such good effect that the branch lent itself to be trimmed into a crutch even easier than he thought for; and having a sharp knife in his girdle he made it into an excellent crutch, by the help of which he hobbled to the castle, reaching it, to his great joy, before Peronnik. For, said he to himself, if Peronnik were before me Redemonde would be sitting with him, whereas she is sitting by herself on the terrace muttering her spells, counting them over and taking great joy from them one by one, for all the world like a countess in front of her jewel-box.

But I must fortify myself, he said, and stopping behind a lilac-bush he addressed himself to St Peter, whom he had almost forgotten till now. By virtue of the relic in my bosom, he muttered, the plume from the tail of the cock that warned thee of thy sin, I beg thee to go to him with whom thy lot was cast on earth, and with whom thy lot is cast in Heaven, and bid him strengthen me in adversity; bid him give me courage and foresight to overcome the sorceress, the ally of Satan; tell him that her belief is that while God rules in Heaven Satan rules the earth, gaining in power daily, that very soon the demons will be under the battlements of Heaven again, at war with the Cherubim and Seraphim. The saints, male and female, are all on my side, said Gilles to himself; it is a match between Heaven and earth, between God and Satan. And may all the saints and the Holy Virgin herself protect me from her if

she should guess that I gave my horse to Sir Peronnik, unless indeed I invent a tale that will seem to her truthful. A better story I shall not find than that Sir Peronnik's horse reared and fell backwards and escaped before the knight could recover his feet, being unused to and hampered by his armour. His youth will awaken pity in her, he said; she will ask for news of him.

And being now out of the shelter of the lilac-bush, Sir Gilles was mindful to whistle a tune to start Redemonde out of her brooding of wicked spells; and he continued to whistle till she raised her eyes, but the sun was in her eyes and she put up her hand to shade them. Sir Gilles continued for a few more bars till Redemonde rose to her feet and started to meet him, saying to herself, The minstrel can be none other than my own cripple! How is it, said Redemonde, that thou comest to me on a crutch instead of a horse, and in such great pain that to-morrow will be spent in thy bed? But how did she know that I was in pain? Sir Gilles asked himself, for he was always suspicious when with her. It is written in my face, maybe, he added; and to discover if his thoughts were known to her he kept his eyes upon her face and, reading no knowledge of them upon it, he said, My relic holds good. And with greater courage than he believed himself to be possessed of he began to prattle the story already arranged in his mind for telling. My relic, said he to himself, is more powerful than her spells; and he prattled on, lengthening his story out till she, wearying of it, picked up her magic mirror and looked into it for news of Peronnik.

He must have passed the dwarf and the lion and the dragon-haunted lake and the river, too, she said, rising from her seat, for hark, the sirens are singing. He will not listen to them and will arrive safely, be not afraid, Sir Gilles answered. We must prepare to welcome him, she said; come with me and bind up my hair, for none but thee can do it beautifully. I would wait here to meet him, Gilles answered, at which Redemonde's face flushed, and she bade him follow her, saying that she would change her raiment. None knows like thee which is most becoming to me. See, my hair is coming down. Come, Gilles, I need thee to bind up my hair; come at once. It is the last time I shall perform these servile duties for her, Sir Gilles muttered, for though I have pandered to her pleasures wickedly, my love of her shall not turn me into her maid-servant.

On the threshold of the portal they stayed their steps for a mo-

ment, and at the same moment the Black Lady asked Peronnik's leave to descend from his horse, saying that she would follow him to the castle.

So Sir Peronnik rode alone up the lawns that encircled the castle, where, after blowing the first fanfare, he waited, thinking that it would show little courtesy to the sorceress for him to blow a second. As if I wished to hurry her, he said to himself. But after waiting some minutes he bethought himself that she might not have heard the first, so he blew a second; and it was as he raised his horn to his lips to blow a third that Redemonde came from the castle to meet him, saying, In my mirror I have watched your triumphs, Sir Peronnik, over the dwarf and the lion. It was by the help of God and the Holy Virgin that I did these things, Peronnik replied, doffing his helmet, and I am glad to be of service to you, lady. But the ride round the ramparts, the greatest task of all, is still undone, and I would undertake it without delay, for the day is waning. But you would not, sir knight, attempt so hard a task on the day of your arrival without eating and drinking? And heedless of his denials she called to her maidens, who, bowing to signify their acceptance of her orders, entered the castle, to return soon after with jewelled dishes piled high with delicious cakes and wine in golden goblets. I thank you, lady of the castle, many times, Peronnik said, but the day is waning and I should be bringing back the Diamond Spear and the Golden Bowl to my village, where they are badly wanted. But a goblet of wine and a slice of cake will be welcome after your ride. The day is hot, Lady Redemonde, answered Peronnik, and he was about to partake of the refreshment, but the lightning flash of expectant triumph in the sorceress's eyes reminded him that he must not partake of meat or drink in the castle. Forgive me, lady, but I have not a moment to lose for a bite or a sup, he said, not even for the eating of this Apple, which I hope you will not refuse to accept; and he doffed his helmet while handing it to her. Redemonde put the Apple in her bosom and Peronnik's face wore an abashment. Which becomes him not ill, said Redemonde, covering herself with her cloak coyly. Satan must look after his own, Peronnik said to himself, and if he doesn't the world will be none the worse without a wicked sorceress who has laid my country waste by spells; and then aloud said, You will forgive me, lady, if I ask Sir Gilles, whom I see coming from the castle, the way to the ramparts. The way to the ramparts, Sir

Gilles said, will be found by riding round the castle to the right; not very far, a little way round after passing the second tower, you will come upon a staircase of a hundred steps, which your horse will have to climb, and should he miss his footing he will not stop falling till he reaches the bottom. You hear what Sir Gilles says, Redemonde cried; but Sir Peronnik pricked on, and when he was out of sight Redemonde turned to Sir Gilles.

Now why didst thou tell him the way to the staircase? she asked. But he could not have failed to find it, and it would be no gain to thee that he should delay his ride, Sir Gilles answered, till to-morrow or the day after, for he has, as thou must have seen, little else in his mind except the quest of the Spear and the Bowl, and thy best chance that he shall get neither is that he rides to-night in the dusk.

Thinkest that he'll come to his death in the chasm? Redemonde asked. Sir Gilles did not answer, and heedless of his silence, as if she had not noticed it, she began to ask him how it was that in passing through the Wood of Deceits and the Valley of Delights other knights, all but thou, were turned from their quests by some enticing vision, the spells of my brother Rogéar; but this one rode on unmoved, plucking an Apple from my apple-tree, despite my faithful dwarf, dead, alas, maybe! It is not by my will that he rides safely. How was it that this last adventurer overcame the lion and the dragons in the lake, and that his eyes did not kindle when we exchanged glances and no huskiness came into his voice when he spoke to me? Gilles, I fear impending doom. But thou'lt not desert me now? Thine eyes cloud and the wavering spirit finds an echo in me. Thou hast not faith in Satan and thine unfaith undoes my faith. My spells will be cast unavailingly.

And, leaving her whilom lover, Redemonde crossed the tessellated pavement towards a chamber that Gilles judged to be one of purifications, for on either side of the doorway were vases. Containing, no doubt, lustral water from the sacred river, he said, and to assure himself he moved towards them, but stopped, bewildered. Lost to me, she said, for ever in this world and the next. Did she speak of two worlds? And to which God am I to pray? Which is the stronger? Which do I love the better, my flesh or my soul? My flesh I know always, my soul only in rare whisperings. But the minutes are going by and I must ally myself to one God or the other. The thought of a prayer to Satan frightened him, and find-

ing that he could not repent his sins with Redemonde his eyes wandered round the temple, and he began incontinently to count the arcades that led hither. There are five, he said, and to his astonishment he remembered that the ceilings were of chalk ribbed with hard stone. But why do I think of chalk and hard stone, things of interest only to builders? Satan puts these thoughts into my mind, for he would accomplish my ruin. Whereupon he began to beseech God to give him strength to resist Satan. But Gilles' heart was dry and his God mute, and in great perplexity he began to consider the style of architecture in which the temple was built. In Ionian or Doric, one or the other, he said; and his thoughts went back to the ten Doric columns that supported the pediment. There are four more, he said, on either side, and the sanctuary is square and vaulted, and the roof is of tiles; and he began to examine the statues in the niches, recognizing those of whom Redemonde had spoken to him.

From the statues his eyes wandered to the pictures with which the walls were decorated, each one representing men and women engaged in agriculture, wreathing vines from tree to tree, wains laden with corn, girls dancing in the vats, crushing the grapes under their feet. And seeing two palm-trees carved in marble Sir Gilles asked himself why they were there, but remembered suddenly that the palm puts forth a branch every month and is therefore sculptured in Nature's temple. But Redemonde will be here in a few moments and all hope of escape for me will be lost. My soul will burn for ever, he cried; and his thoughts began to wander from the burning of souls to the lamps, the goblets, the cruets, the vases, the sprinklers, the mitres, the censers, the jewelled ornaments worn by the priests and priestesses of Satan, the timbrels, the trumpets, and the cymbals.

Along the walls were seats in silver and ivory, and in a great perplexity he strove to read the strange inscriptions interwoven through the pavement under his feet; and then forgetful of them he gave ear to the music with which the temple was slowly filling, voices coming from the arcades and the galleries! Devil music, he cried, for as his ears became accustomed to the rhythms he began to recognize them as litanies sung to an accompaniment of timbrels and flutes. And walking to the measure of the music, Redemonde came, her long, thick hair falling into ringlets, floating over her shoulders; a many-shapen and many-coloured crown decked her head, and a sil-

ver moon shone upon her forehead, on either side of which serpents writhed amid ripe ears of wheat; her gown of shifting colours changed with every movement of the folds from the purest white to saffron-yellow, or seemed to catch the redness of flame; her cloak of deepest black was sown with stars and bordered with a luminous fringe; her right hand held a timbrel, which gave forth a clear sound, and in her left she carried a waxen image.

As she approached the brazier the singers seemed to Sir Gilles to have drawn nearer, or it may have been that his ears had grown accustomed to the music and could now distinguish individual voices and instruments; and the shapes, too, of those in the processions passing through the different arcades and aisles and grouped in the galleries grew precise and then melted into shadow shapes and were lost in the great fume of incense rising from the brazier.

O great Nature, Redemonde said, worshipped by man under different names till his eyes were turned from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of Heaven and sin was born unto man, we, thy worshippers, implore thee to come once again to the grapple with thy rival, Sabaoth, at the edge of the chasm, for a knight who knows thee not is riding thither. O great Nature—Cybele in Phrygia, Minerva in Athens, Ceres in Eleusis, Isis in Egypt, Satan throughout Christendom—help us or see thy kingdom pass away. I bring to the brazier a waxen image, and as the wax melts, as the image begins to droop out of human shape, the Christian knight loses strength. The spell works well. Hold up the mirror, Gilles, that I may see whither he rides. He rides, Sir Gilles answered, towards the chasm wherein I fell. Before he reaches it, Redemonde replied, the image must pass into uncouth wax again. But the embers in the brazier are dying, Gilles; heap some more charcoal upon them quickly, for live embers are wanted to melt the wax. Two handfuls of charcoal will revive the dying embers; quickly, Gilles, quickly. Is thy faith still with the Christian God? Art betraying me? she cried, and seeing that the brazier was not giving enough heat to melt the wax she threw the image upon the dying embers.

He has crossed the chasm, Sir Gilles cried, rising from the mirror, and I have lost thee, Redemonde, and for centuries the world is delivered over to Satan's wrath. Redemonde passed from the brazier and sank upon a seat, waiting for the doom that she knew was imminent. The kingdom of Satan passes and the kingdom of the Lord God is at hand, she muttered, and Sir Gilles saw her take the

Apple that Peronnik had given her from her bosom and eat. Will she not speak again? Have I lost her, have I lost her? he cried, never to see her again? And the triumph that God had won over Satan passed out of his mind, and he was about to throw himself at her feet and confess his betrayal when Sir Peronnik came into the temple and took the keys from the sorceress's girdle. Whither is the way? asked Sir Peronnik, and the words awoke a fierce exaltation in Sir Gilles' heart. I will point out the way, he said, through the labyrinths of the castle to the dungeon in which the Spear and the Bowl are hidden. But we shall need a lantern. We have one here, said Peronnik, displaying the Laughing Flower, and holding the Flower high like a lantern he followed Gilles out of the temple.

And their feet were barely on the steps leading to the vault when the Black Lady moved from out of the shadows of the pillars and, advancing towards Redemonde, touched her upon the shoulder. At the touch of the Plague Redemonde fell dead, and the Plague, now no more than a mote in the air, floated out of the high windows. And when Peronnik and Sir Gilles returned with the Spear and the Bowl, Gilles, said Peronnik, touch her not. Why are you weeping for her? Why askest thou me this? Sir Gilles answered. I am wondering, Peronnik replied, why men set such store on women, and of all on wicked women. Life will reveal that secret to thee sooner or later, Peronnik; mayhap never. I have no head for thinking things out, said Peronnik, but now I must return to my village and redeem my country from a cruel drought.

IV

The many rooks were settling themselves in the branches of the beeches when the knights came from the castle, and the rooks continued for a long while to flop home through the evening sky. Hast thou no ears for what I am saying to thee, Peronnik, and no eyes to watch for a path that might lead us to a village? I thought, answered Peronnik, that I knew all the forest, but nobody knows all the trees and dells and hill-tops in it. To which Sir Gilles made no answer, it seeming to him that he was in the power of Peronnik to lead him out of or to lose him in the forest. But, Peronnik, for what art thou loitering? Wouldst thou return to the Grey Castle and give back the Spear and the Bowl to Redemonde? The Plague has gotten her, Peronnik answered; and your lameness has departed

from you, Sir Gilles. My lameness, Sir Gilles replied, was part of her and has gone with her. And her spells, he added, so thoughtfully that Peronnik began to wonder if he rued his swinging gait and wished himself back in the old pain. But of what art thou thinking, Peronnik? Of what they are saying about me in the village, of the herd of cows I left behind before watering them at the well. There was barely half a bucket to give them, poor animals, after much winding. Would indeed that I may live to see them supping the cool stream again.

The conqueror of Redemonde's spells thinking of cows, forgetful that he is no longer Peronnik the Fool but a knight of whom all the world will soon be talking, Sir Gilles said. One can't forget oneself all in a day and a night, Peronnik answered; nor am I thinking altogether of the cows, nor of the farmer at the head of a search party, but of the way we have lost, for the forest we're in seems more unlike my forest at every step we take. But we are in a path, said Sir Gilles, and have but to follow it. We are in a path, it is true, replied Peronnik, but who made the path? I am asking myself; not the feet of men nor of cows, but the hooves of deer. Or goats, maybe, Sir Gilles answered him. Deer, replied Peronnik. A little further on Peronnik stooped again, and spying some new tracks he said, A bear has been paddling about here. But as long as the Spear is with us no man or beast can harm us. That is so, Sir Gilles replied. All the same, said Peronnik, it would be well for us to seek a comfortable tree, with large thick branches, where we might snooze. And fall out of, mayhap, Sir Gilles interrupted, and the Spear being up in the branches we should be eaten like common folk. And Peronnik having no reply to make, they wandered on and on in the hope of coming upon a path that would lead them to a village, till at last weariness overcame them, and, sitting down to rest, they fell asleep, forgetful of the wolves that might be about. Out of this sleep Peronnik was the first to awake, and he cried to Sir Gilles that he must come to his feet at once.

And through the dusk and through the day they fared, finding themselves sometimes in roads that seemed to lead direct to a village, but which stopped short or were lost in dense undergrowths. Sometimes it seemed to them that they were by the Grey Castle; about them was the rookery, but no castle. Yet it was not carried away as a rook's nest is by a storm, said Peronnik, a great big castle

built with stones half as big as an ox cart. No, it cannot have been here, he continued, that the castle stood, and I'm thinking that the sorceress's spells are upon this wood. Speak not so, Sir Gilles replied, else my courage fails me altogether. Yet here, returned Peronnik, is the rookery that we passed yesterevening; and a dispute arose between the twain whether it was the same rookery or another one.

And for two days more they wandered, living on berries, slaking their thirst with such water as collects in hollows, till in a quiet sundown, overworn, weary, and hopeless, they lay in the belief that the wood they were in was spellbound. We are lost beyond hope of this world or the next, said Sir Gilles, and it might be well to lie down and die without further fatigue or dread of the phantoms that have their ghostly habitation here. Let us walk into yon morass and smother in it. Do you think, said Peronnik, his soul catching fear, that a dead sorceress is a greater peril to knights than a living one? The power of the dead over the living is great, Sir Gilles replied. But your relic, Sir Gilles. My relic! I had forgotten it, Sir Gilles muttered, and forgetfulness of a relic robs it of its power. But as it is our last hope let us both put our trust in it. And together they spoke of the stars above the Sea of Galilee until the forest was black about them. After each sleep they prayed, and at dawn Peronnik said, Let us put all our faith in the relic; and since I am a knight and wandering with thee in the forest, let it be "thou" and "thee." "Thou" and "thee" let it be then, Sir Gilles answered, till the time, not far away, when we shall bid each other good-bye for ever. Speak not so lest the relic fail us, Peronnik replied.

And they wandered on till Sir Gilles fell lame, not with the old lameness which Redemonde's spells cast upon him to retain him in her service, a lameness which was that of Satan or Vulcan when they were cast out of Heaven, but a natural lameness that comes upon a man after wandering three days in a forest without rest or food. I can go no further, Peronnik, he said, laying himself upon the ground; let death come. Take away thy berries; I cannot eat. If thou canst not eat thou canst still open thine eyes, said Peronnik; look, we've wandered to within half a league of the village. Thou speakest to hearten me, said Sir Gilles. Not so, answered Peronnik; courage, Gilles, for my promise to thee is that within an hour we shall be in my village. Go thou to the village, said Sir Gilles, and

I will lie here and await thy coming. And be eaten by a wolf or a bear, perhaps, replied Peronnik. No, no; we fare on to the end together.

A weary faring this last half-league was to Sir Gilles, barely able to bear the pain of his feet and the sickness of hunger. Look round thee, Gilles, said Peronnik, and tell me if we are not hard by the village. And looking round Sir Gilles answered, It seems to me that I have seen yon fields shining between these trees before. In very truth we are on the verge of the forest. At the sight of the corn Sir Gilles was again heartened, and walked steadfastly till Peronnik stopped suddenly and said, Yonder! What seest thou yonder, Peronnik? Farmer Leroux, Peronnik whispered; and his knighthood fallen from him he was again Farmer Leroux's neat-herd, with no thought in his mind but how to escape from him into the forest. It was now the turn of Sir Gilles to grasp him by the arm and remind him again that he was no longer Peronnik the Fool, but the valiant knight who overcame Redemonde in her enchanted castle. And, leading him to Farmer Leroux, Sir Gilles asked him for news of a lad named Peronnik. Would indeed that I had news of him, said the farmer, for if I had I'd be quickly about my own business, which is to thrash the rascal for his desertion of the herd he was given in charge of four or five days ago. I have chosen my stoutest stick to lay across his back, and not an inch of unblackened skin will I leave on it, and if I kill him not his luck will never desert him.

The farmer might have continued in this way for a long time if Sir Gilles had not interrupted him with these words, But thine eyes are upon him now, farmer. My eyes upon him! How am I to understand your words, sir knight? What covert meaning—I am bringing back to thee, said Sir Gilles, a knight of valiant deeds in and about the Grey Castle, the conqueror of the sorceress who cursed the land with a great drought. How bringing back to me? inquired Leroux. The knight who stands before thee, Sir Gilles answered, was once thy neat-herd. My Peronnik, the farmer stammered, my Peronnik in a suit of mail! And who may you be, sir knight? I am Sir Gilles de Lacenaire, who admitted Sir Peronnik into the Order of Knighthood that he might overcome the sorceress's spells. My Peronnik, the farmer began again—No longer thy Peronnik, Sir Gilles interrupted, but a knight of whom all the world will be talking before many weeks are over, for he brings the Spear and the Bowl. But will the Spear bring down the rain that will

save the rest of my herd, asked Leroux, or is it a mere spear of chivalry that concerns me not? Soon after the hurling of the Spear into the air, said Sir Gilles, the desert about us will be a green country again, fresh as in May-time. Then let the Spear be hurled at once, answered the farmer, and my poor cows put out of the pain of thirst. We have neither eaten nor drunken for three days, Sir Gilles replied; we are starving men; but as soon as we are rested—— In my house yonder, cried Farmer Leroux, you will find bread and wine and cheese and butter and other things the goodwife may have in her larder. So you have gotten the Spear, the holy Spear that will bring us rain, and the story thereof will be glad in the villagers' ears. But here we are at my house, Sir Gilles; and now, wife, make ready the house to receive the knights who have come back with the Spear that brings the rain.

And who may they be? the wife asked. First pile the table with bread and wine and cheese and butter, and strike off from the carcass above thee as much bacon as will end the hunger of men who have not eaten for three days. But this is Peronnik, our Peronnik! Thine eyes are quicker than mine, Leroux replied, and while the knights eat a tale of many marvels thou shalt hear from me. Before you, sir knights, is all my house has of meat and drink; and fall to your food, Sir Peronnik, for you will need all your strength for the hurling of the Spear. Sir Peronnik! the wife stuttered. Life is a miracle, wife, full to the brim of wonders. But take thine eyes off him and listen to his story. So Peronnik got the Spear from her, said the goodwife, which doesn't surprise me overmuch now I come to get my mind to it, for we all knew there was something wonderful in him. Begin thy story, husband. When they have eaten they will tell it, answered the farmer. We will, we will, cried the famished knights. And while they eat I'll be up the street telling the folk that Peronnik has returned with the Spear. Nor was she long away when voices began to be heard about the doorway. In a little while calls for Peronnik broke forth, and when he appeared in all his mail in the doorway the villagers could not show their joy enough. Even the great drought that the Spear was to bring to an end was forgotten, and before Peronnik had told his story the folk were telling new stories among themselves, how the sorceress's castle had been scaled and how she had come by her death. It was said, too, that Sir Gilles had overcome the magical arts of Redemonde's brother Rogéar, and that Rogéar had pro-

nounced a great curse upon the Spear before it was captured which would bring ill luck to whomsoever possessed it.

But as long as it brings down the rain, what matter? cried a woman. The Spear may lose its virtue, cried another. What matter? cried a third, for God has conquered Satan in a last battle and he will see that we do not want for rain any more nor sunshine when we need it. At these words a great hymn of thanksgiving came upon the folk suddenly, words and music together, and till the hill-top was reached no word was spoken. If the Spear bringeth rain from yon sky, said a man, then it is God's own Spear, and the reign of Satan is over, as Marguerite Lebrun said on our way hither. And then a peasant, Pierre le Gros, spoke of the great fire that would break out in the forest if the Spear were not hurled quickly. The Spear has not come too soon, for after this drought the country would burn for months, covering the country with ashes. Hush, woman, hush, for Sir Peronnik is about to hurl the Spear.

The hurling of the Spear was the signal for the renewal of the hymn of thanksgiving, and the crowd sang it all through the afternoon and evening; and men, women, and children were out of their beds singing to each other from window to window across the street-way till rain began to fall so heavily that they were driven back to their beds. After the first shower it seemed as if the storm were about to pass over, but after a pause the thunder crashed so loudly that in the village of Saint-Jean-de-Braie the world seemed to be overturning. The rain has come at last in right earnest, the villagers cried, returning to their beds, their ears open to the sound of water gurgling down the gutters. The folk listened, and fell asleep at last, happy in the knowledge that the Spear had saved their country from famine.

All next day it rained and all through the week. The ruts filled with water and the fields were green again with new grass. A second springtime, the villagers said; and then the rain came down fiercely and beat in the windows, and then it fell straight like a sheet. At the end of each day there were bright intervals of a few hours, but next day rain fell again and the farmers spoke of the great stock of wheat still uncarried. Our wheat will be spoilt if this rain does not cease, they said. Maybe it would have been as well for us if some of our cows had died for want of water and for us to have had our wheat. And July passed over and August was well

begun before the rain ceased. We have rested long enough, Gilles said to Peronnik, in Saint-Jean-de-Braie. Our business is to the rescuing of honest men from thieves and maidens from lustful rogues.

When the news that the knights were leaving them was about many villagers came to Sir Peronnik to offer him in return for his services the beginning of a herd. Three young heifers are all I would ask, said Peronnik. Beware, replied Gilles, for no man returns whence he came. Thou hast entered the Order of Knighthood, and whosoever enters it never leaves it till he dies, if he leave it then. So we must on, Peronnik, taking from the village only a horse, for thou must be horsed according to thy quality. But shall we never see you again? Will you not return to us? the villagers cried as the twain rode forth. That mayhap and it may not hap; all is in the hand of God, said Sir Gilles as he waved farewell to the folk who ran alongside and between the horses; and at last to escape them he pricked on. Though we never see Saint-Jean-de-Braie again, he said, we have done deeds that will bear fruit that the folk will find sweet under the tooth for many a day.

And it was as Sir Gilles foresaw, for during the winter of the same year the folk of Saint-Jean-de-Braie were telling the story of a beleaguered city in which Sir Peronnik fed the starving and with his lance routed the French. And the next year further exploits were related—that Sir Peronnik had conquered Anjou, Poitou, and Normandy, and was away now on the Crusades winning great triumphs over the Saracens, obliging Saladin to accept baptism and give to him his daughter in marriage. The years went by, and it became common gossip in Saint-Jean-de-Braie that the Saracen lady had borne him a hundred sons and that he had given to each a kingdom to rule over. And as the years passed over and generations came and went it came to be believed in Saint-Jean-de-Braie that by virtue of the Golden Bowl Sir Peronnik and many of his sons were still living. And then heresies, or shadows of heresies, came over. Whence they came none knew, but it was whispered certainly by a sceptical generation that the enchanter Rogéar at last won the Spear and the Bowl back from the Christians, that he has them now, and that anybody who wants them may go and search for them like Peronnik the Fool.

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN

BY CONSTANCE MAYFIELD ROURKE

THERE is fruit in the huge bowl which holds the centre of the long dark table: green grapes with a white dusk of bloom, oranges and lemons, a bright apple, some apricots, a softly moulded cantaloup. The bowl itself is a reproduction of a late Renaissance piece. Big candlesticks which precisely match it stand upon the long sideboard. Even in the dim light their gilded and coloured detail is emphatic. The dining-room is avowedly palatial, with its huge pieces of Tudor furniture, its heavy carving and panelling.

A young woman sits tranquilly alone at the end of the table, eating an ice, and in the moist warmth of the shaded room—for the day is very hot—her pallor has the rich and subtle quality of a white magnolia. Her eyes are brown, with a sudden slant upwards at the ends of the lower lids; her hair shows bronze and green; her throat is heavy, though it has beauty. Manet would have liked her short thick hands and the firm set of her bust and hips.

She always has this air of exotic tranquillity. Yet she is for ever at war, a quiet, submerged, unceasing war; and as she plants her elbows on the table she seems a formidable adversary. She is full of negations—denials—refusals—affirmations which are phrased as negatives—negatives which are masked as affirmations. With scarcely a ripple of expression she breathes, proclaims, "No, no, no, no, no!" Tranquil as she looks she lives with her thumbs down, her thick thumbs. She can use a sledgehammer when she chooses; she can be cruel in minor, almost negligible ways. Yet in all her contentions she is singularly transparent; if she is malicious, she is also without guile. She never has a plan, she is almost totally lacking in forethought and afterthought, her opinions are variable and contradictory. But she never really retreats. She keeps her even, unbroken front; her brow remains smooth, her mouth soft and unformulated.

For years her father had been comfortably prosperous in the manufacture of an intricate kind of machine-belt; then, during the war, the demand for his product became fabulous. Now he is in the

midst of a boyish efflorescence of spending. He is a lithe, active, youngist man, something of an exquisite within conventional limits; he makes friends easily; he would like to have his daughter make a place for herself in his new circle, for he has no other children; his wife died when his daughter was a little girl of six, and he has not married again. But she declares that these people bore her. However, the debates on this topic do not bore her. She enjoys them. She is voluble and obstinate, and curiously, awkwardly coy.

In spite of her lavish allowance she becomes absorbed periodically in a fever of hat and dress making. The results are bizarre; she is clumsy, she has little sense of her own type. She faces hats with purple or yellow or a harsh blue-green, and decorates them with long feathers. Once she made a frilled and trailing tea-gown; another time she achieved a half-mediaeval cape, which almost became her, even with its doubtful cut and poor sewing. She works with a great litter of materials around her, in an untroubled ecstasy of creation; she admires her products innocently and extravagantly. Her father is likely to exercise his rapid gift for satire upon them; but she overwhelms him, envelops him, with explanations—always with her consistent negative undercurrent. She declares that she never can find what she wants in the shops, that the materials are never so good as those which she can buy herself, that even the higher-priced dressmakers always fail to turn out what she wants. Triumphant, she wears her creations. She is vain; it apparently does not occur to her that she can ever look anything but well.

Her most apparent bond with her father is a delight in fast driving. She sits, as tranquilly impassive as ever, at the wheel of an expensive car, her grasp close and firm; a glitter in her brown eyes as she strikes a particularly good stretch of road or perfectly negotiates a dangerous turn. When she drives she suggests that she might do something spectacular—from caprice—not with the car but with her own life: something which her father, at least, would regard as spectacular. She might perhaps elope with the mechanic who takes care of his cars and her own, except that he happens to be a squat, bespectacled, beaver-like creature who barely elicits her notice.

She might go off with a trick air-plane pilot; but she probably would be happier if she could become one; she will in any case be likely to take a husband as a passenger. But marriage at present does

not seem in prospect for her, though she has a knack which amounts almost to genius for picking up acquaintance with men, always by conventional but slightly circuitous, adventurous methods. A bank clerk, a canvassing salesman for books of knowledge, a motor demonstrator, a promoter, a reporter, an illustrator of fashion magazines; these are only a few of a long procession which she began, hesitatingly, to create when she was a shy sullen schoolgirl of sixteen, nine or ten years ago. They nearly always have a picturesqueness of character or history, these young men: but they have all been casuals, acquaintances of a week, a month, two or three months. She seems to look them over with her absorbed smile: then she puts them bluntly aside.

She may seize or hew out for herself a portion of happiness somehow, for she has, in spite of the sombre effect of her denials and negations, an elementary capacity for happiness, something sudden and unexpected and clear, like a waterfall in a dark forest. At times she talks on about anything, everything, nothing, with a free and singing undertone; she becomes tolerant, almost charming. But even then she keeps intact the soft impregnable armour of her personality. She is naïve, but she is unapproachable. She sits in the long jade and gold drawing-room and seems to capture for herself what glamour it has, for the enhancement of her rich hair, her pallor; she thrusts others out of the picture. The jade and gold drawing-room was her own idea; she regards it as a setting. At the same time her broad and subtle beauty shows the expensive decorations for the tawdry, flimsy, characterless things they are. With a sudden surge of quiet movement she could reduce them all to kindling wood and fling them to the wind.



Courtesy of the Knoedler Galleries

AN ETCHING. BY KENNETH HAYES MILLER

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DICKENS

BY G. SANTAYANA

IF Christendom should lose everything that is now in the melting-pot, human life would still remain amiable and quite adequately human. I draw this comforting assurance from the pages of Dickens. Who could not be happy in his world? Yet there is nothing essential to it which the most destructive revolution would be able to destroy. People would still be as different, as absurd, and as charming as are his characters; the springs of kindness and folly in their lives would not be dried up. Indeed, there is much in Dickens which communism, if it came, would only emphasize and render universal. Those schools, those poor-houses, those prisons, with those surviving shreds of family life in them, show us what in the coming age (with some sanitary improvements) would be the nursery and home of everybody. Everybody would be a waif, like *Oliver Twist*, like *Smikey*, like *Pip*, and like *David Copperfield*; and amongst the agents and underlings of social government, to whom all these waifs would be entrusted, there would surely be a goodly sprinkling of *Pecksniffs*, *Squeers's*, and *Fangs*; whilst the *Fagins* would be everywhere commissioners of the people. Nor would there fail to be, in high places and in low, the occasional sparkle of some *Pickwick* or *Cheeryble Brothers* or *Sam Weller* or *Mark Tapley*; and the voluble *Flora Finchings* would be everywhere in evidence, and the strong-minded *Betsy Trotwoods* in office. There would also be, among the inefficient, many a *Dora* and *Agnes* and *Little Emily*—with her charm but without her tragedy, since this is one of the things which the promised social reform would happily render impossible; I mean, by removing all the disgrace of it. The only element in the world of Dickens which would become obsolete would be the setting, the atmosphere of material instrumentalities and arrangements, as travelling by coach is obsolete; but travelling by rail, by motor, or by air-ship will emotionally be much the same thing. It is worth noting how such instrumentalities, which absorb modern life, are admired and enjoyed by Dickens, as they were by *Homer*. The poets ought not to be afraid of them; they exercise the mind congenially, and can be played with joyfully.

Consider the black ships and the chariots of Homer, the coaches and riverboats of Dickens, and the aeroplanes of to-day; to what would an unspoiled young mind turn with more interest? Dickens tells us little of English sports, but he shares the sporting nature of the Englishman, to whom the whole material world is a playing-field, the scene giving ample scope to his love of action, legality, and pleasant achievement. His art is to sport according to the rules of the game, and to do things for the sake of doing them, rather than for any ulterior motive.

It is remarkable, in spite of his ardent simplicity and openness of heart, how insensible Dickens was to the greater themes of the human imagination—religion, science, politics, art. He was a waif himself, and utterly disinherited. For example, the terrible heritage of contentious religions which fills the world seems not to exist for him. In this matter he was like a sensitive child, with a most religious disposition, but no religious ideas. Perhaps, properly speaking, he had no *ideas* on any subject; what he had was a vast sympathetic participation in the daily life of mankind; and what he saw of ancient institutions made him hate them, as needless sources of oppression, misery, selfishness, and rancour. His one political passion was philanthropy, genuine but felt only on its negative, reforming side; of positive utopias or enthusiasms we hear nothing. The political background of Christendom is only, so to speak, an old faded back-drop for his stage; a castle, a frigate, a gallows, and a large female angel with white wings standing above an orphan by an open grave—a decoration which has to serve for all the melodramas in his theatre, intellectually so provincial and poor. Common life as it is lived was varied and lovable enough for Dickens, if only the pests and cruelties could be removed from it. Suffering wounded him, but not vulgarity; whatever pleased his senses and whatever shocked them filled his mind alike with romantic wonder, with the endless delight of observation. Vulgarity—and what can we relish, if we recoil at vulgarity?—was innocent and amusing; in fact, for the humorist, it was the spice of life. There was more piety in being human than in being pious. In reviving Christmas, Dickens transformed it from the celebration of a metaphysical mystery into a feast of overflowing simple kindness and good cheer; the church bells were still there—in the orchestra; and the angels of Bethlehem were still there—painted on the back-drop. Churches, in his novels, are vague desolate places where one

has ghastly experiences, and where only the pew-opener is human; and such religious and political conflicts as he depicts in *Barnaby Rudge* and in *A Tale of Two Cities* are street brawls and prison scenes and conspiracies in taverns, without any indication of the contrasts in mind or interests between the opposed parties. Nor had Dickens any lively sense for fine art, classical tradition, science, or even the manners and feelings of the upper classes in his own time and country: in his novels we may almost say there is no army, no navy, no church, no sport, no distant travel, no daring adventure, no feeling for the watery wastes and the motley nations of the planet, and—luckily, with his notion of them—no lords and ladies. Even love of the traditional sort is hardly in Dickens' sphere—I mean the soldierly passion in which a rather rakish gallantry was sobered by devotion, and loyalty rested on pride. In Dickens love is sentimental or benevolent or merry or sneaking or canine; in his last book he was going to describe a love that was passionate and criminal; but love for him was never chivalrous, never poetical. What he paints most tragically is a quasi-paternal devotion in the old to the young, the love of Mr Peggotty for Little Emily, or of Solomon Gills for Walter Gay. A series of shabby little adventures, such as might absorb the interest of an average youth, were romantic enough for Dickens.

I say he was disinherited, but he inherited the most terrible negations. Religion lay on him like the weight of the atmosphere, sixteen pounds to the square inch, yet never noticed nor mentioned. He lived and wrote in the shadow of the most awful prohibitions. Hearts petrified by legality and falsified by worldliness offered, indeed, a good subject for a novelist, and Dickens availed himself of it to the extent of always contrasting natural goodness and happiness with whatever is morose; but his morose people were wicked, not virtuous in their own way; so that the protest of his temperament against his environment never took a radical form nor went back to first principles. He needed to feel, in his writing, that he was carrying the sympathies of every man with him. In him conscience was single, and he could not conceive how it could ever be divided in other men. He denounced scandals without exposing shams, and conformed willingly and scrupulously to the proprieties. Lady Dedlock's secret, for instance, he treats as if it were the sin of Adam, remote, mysterious, inexpiable. Mrs Dombey is not allowed to deceive her husband except by pretending to deceive

him. The seduction of Little Emily is left out altogether, with the whole character of Steerforth, the development of which would have been so important in the moral experience of David Copperfield himself. But it is not public prejudice alone that plays the censor over Dickens' art; his own kindness and even weakness of heart act sometimes as marplots. The character of Miss Mowcher, for example, so brilliantly introduced, was evidently intended to be shady, and to play a very important part in the story; but its original in real life, which was recognized, had to be conciliated, and the sequel was omitted and patched up with an apology—itsself admirable—for the poor dwarf. Such a sacrifice does honour to Dickens' heart; but artists should meditate on their works in time, and it is easy to remove any too great likeness in a portrait by a few touches making it more consistent than real people are apt to be; and in this case, if the little creature had been really guilty, how much more subtle and tragic her apology for herself might have been, like that of the bastard Edmund in *King Lear*! So too in *Dombey and Son*, Dickens could not bear to let Walter Gay turn out badly, as he had been meant to do, and to break his uncle's heart as well as the heroine's; he was accordingly transformed into a stage hero miraculously saved from shipwreck, and Florence was not allowed to reward the admirable Toots, as she should have done, with her trembling hand. But Dickens was no free artist; he had more genius than taste, a warm fancy not aided by a thorough understanding of complex characters. He worked under pressure, for money and applause, and often had to cheapen in execution what his inspiration had so vividly conceived.

What, then, is there left, if Dickens has all these limitations? In our romantic disgust we might be tempted to say, Nothing. But in fact almost everything is left, almost everything that counts in the daily life of mankind, or that by its presence or absence can determine whether life shall be worth living or not; because a simple good life is worth living, and an elaborate bad life is not. There remains in the first place eating and drinking; relished not bestially but humanly, jovially, as the sane and exhilarating basis for everything else. This is a sound English beginning; but the immediate sequel, as the England of that day presented it to Dickens, is no less delightful. There is the ruddy glow of the hearth; the sparkle of glasses and brasses and well-scrubbed pewter; the savoury fumes of the hot punch, after the tingle of the wintry air; the coaching-

scenes, the motley figures and absurd incidents of travel; the changing sights and joys of the road. And then, to balance this, the traffic of ports and cities, the hubbub of crowded streets, the luxury of shop-windows and of palaces not to be entered; the procession of the passers-by, shabby or ludicrously genteel; the dingy look and musty smell of their lodgings; the labyrinth of back-alleys, courts, and mews, with their crying children, and scolding old women, and listless half-drunken loiterers. These sights, like fables, have a sort of moral in them to which Dickens was very sensitive; the important airs of nobodies on great occasions, the sadness and pre-occupation of the great as they hasten by in their mourning or on their pressing affairs; the sadly comic characters of the tavern; the diligence of shop-keepers, like squirrels turning in their cages; the children peeping out everywhere like grass in an untrodden street; the charm of humble things, the nobleness of humble people, the horror of crime, the ghastliness of vice, the deft hand and shining face of virtue passing through the midst of it all; and finally a fresh wind of indifference and change blowing across our troubles and clearing the most lurid sky.

I do not know whether it was Christian charity or naturalistic insight, or a mixture of both (for they are closely akin) that attracted Dickens particularly to the deformed, the half-witted, the abandoned, or those impeded or misunderstood by virtue of some singular inner consecration. The visible moral of these things, when brutal prejudice does not blind us to it, comes very near to true philosophy; one turn of the screw, one flash of reflection, and we have understood nature and human morality and the relation between them.

In his love of roads and wayfarers, of river-ports and wharves and the idle or sinister figures that lounge about them, Dickens was like Walt Whitman; and I think a second Dickens may any day appear in America, when it is possible in that land of hurry to reach the same degree of saturation, the same unquestioning pleasure in the familiar facts. The spirit of Dickens would be better able to do justice to America than was that of Walt Whitman; because America, although it may seem nothing but a noisy nebula to the impressionist, is not a nebula but a concourse of very distinct individual bodies, natural and social, each with its definite interests and story. Walt Whitman had a sort of transcendental philosophy which swallowed the universe whole, supposing there was a univer-

sal spirit in things identical with the absolute spirit that observed them; but Dickens was innocent of any such clap-trap, and remained a true spirit in his own person. Kindly and clear-sighted, but self-identical and unequivocally human, he glided through the slums like one of his own little heroes, uncontaminated by their squalor and confusion, courageous and firm in his clear allegiances amid the flux of things, a pale angel at the Carnival, his heart aflame, his voice always flute-like in its tenderness and warning. This is the true relation of spirit to existence, not the other which confuses them; for this earth (I cannot speak for the universe at large) has no spirit of its own, but brings forth spirits only at certain points, in the hearts and brains of frail living creatures, who like insects flit through it, buzzing and gathering what sweets they can; and it is the spaces they traverse in this career, charged with their own moral burden, that they can report on or describe, not things rolling on to infinity in their vain tides. To be hypnotized by that flood would be a heathen idolatry. Accordingly Walt Whitman, in his comprehensive democratic vistas, could never see the trees for the wood, and remained incapable, for all his diffuse love of the human herd, of ever painting a character or telling a story; the very things in which Dickens was a master. It is this life of the individual, as it may be lived in a given nation, that determines the whole value of that nation to the poet, to the moralist, and to the judicious historian. But for the excellence of the typical single life, no nation deserves to be remembered, more than the sands of the sea; and America will not be a success, if every American is a failure.

Dickens entered the theatre of this world by the stage door; the shabby little adventures of the actors in their private capacity replace for him the mock tragedies which they enact before a dreaming public. Mediocrity of circumstances and mediocrity of soul for ever return to the centre of his stage; a more wretched or a grander existence is sometimes broached, but the pendulum soon swings back, and we return, with the relief with which we put on our slippers after the most romantic excursion, to a golden mediocrity—to mutton and beer, and to love and babies in a suburban villa with one frowzy maid. Dickens is the poet of those acres of yellow brick streets which the traveller sees from the railway viaducts as he approaches London; they need a poet, and they deserve one, since a complete human life may very well be lived there.

Their little excitements and sorrows, their hopes and humours are like those of the Wooden Midshipman in *Dombey and Son*; but the sea is not far off, and the sky—Dickens never forgets it—is above all those brief troubles. He had a sentiment in the presence of this vast flatness of human fates, in spite of their individual pungency, which I think might well be the dominant sentiment of mankind in the future; a sense of happy freedom in littleness, an open-eyed reverence and religion without words. This universal human anonymity is like a sea, an infinite democratic desert, chock-full and yet the very image of emptiness, with nothing in it for the mind, except, as the Moslems say, the presence of Allah. Awe is the counterpart of humility—and this is perhaps religion enough. The atom in the universal vortex ought to be humble; he ought to see that, materially, he doesn't much matter, and that morally his loves are merely his own, without authority over the universe. He can admit without obloquy that he is what he is; and he can rejoice in his own being, and in that of all other things in so far as he can share it sympathetically. The apportionment of existence and of fortune is in Other Hands; his own portion is contentment, vision, love, and laughter.

Having humility, that most liberating of sentiments, having a true vision of human existence and joy in that vision, Dickens had in a superlative degree the gift of humour, of mimicry, of unrestrained farce. He was the perfect comedian. When people say Dickens exaggerates, it seems to me they can have no eyes and no ears. They probably have only *notions* of what things and people are; they accept them conventionally, at their diplomatic value. Their minds run on in the region of discourse, where there are masks only and no faces, ideas and no facts; they have little sense for those living grimaces that play from moment to moment upon the countenance of the world. The world is a perpetual caricature of itself; at every moment it is the mockery and the contradiction of what it is pretending to be. But as it nevertheless intends all the time to be something different and highly dignified, at the next moment it corrects and checks and tries to cover up the absurd thing it was; so that a conventional world, a world of masks, is superimposed on the reality, and passes in every sphere of human interest for the reality itself. Humour is the perception of this illusion, the fact allowed to pierce here and there through the convention, whilst the convention continues to be maintained, as if we

had not observed its absurdity. Pure comedy is more radical, cruder, in a certain sense less human; because comedy throws the convention over altogether, revels for a moment in the fact, and brutally says to the notions of mankind, as if it slapped them in the face, There, take that! That's what you really are! At this the polite world pretends to laugh, not tolerantly as it does at humour, but a little angrily. It does not like to see itself by chance in the glass, without having had time to compose its features for demure self-contemplation. "What a bad mirror," it exclaims; "it must be concave or convex; for surely I never looked like that. Mere caricature, farce, and horse-play. Dickens exaggerates; I never was so sentimental as that; I never saw anything so dreadful; I don't believe there were ever any people like Quilp, or Squeers, or Sergeant Buzfuz." But the polite world is lying; there *are* such people; we are such people ourselves in our true moments, in our veritable impulses; but we are careful to stifle and to hide those moments from ourselves and from the world; to purse and pucker ourselves into the mask of our conventional personality; and so simpering, we profess that it is very coarse and inartistic of Dickens to undo our life's work for us in an instant, and remind us of what we are. And as to other people, though we may allow that considered superficially they are often absurd, we do not wish to dwell on their eccentricities, nor to mimic them. On the contrary, it is good manners to look away quickly, to suppress a smile, and to say to ourselves that the ludicrous figure in the street is not at all comic, but a dull ordinary Christian, and that it is foolish to give any importance to the fact that its hat has blown off, that it has slipped on an orange-peel and unintentionally sat on the pavement, that it has a pimple on its nose, that its one tooth projects over its lower lip, that it is angry with things in general, and that it is looking everywhere for the penny which it holds tightly in its hand. That may fairly represent the moral condition of most of us at most times; but we do not want to think of it; we do not want to see; we gloss the fact over; we console ourselves before we are grieved, and re-assert our composure before we have laughed. We are afraid, ashamed, anxious to be spared. What displeases us in Dickens is that he does not spare us; he mimics things to the full; he dilates and exhausts and repeats; he wallows. He is too intent on the passing experience to look over his shoulder, and consider whether we have not already understood, and had enough. He is not thinking of us; he is obey-

ing the impulse of the passion, the person, or the story he is enacting. This faculty, which renders him a consummate comedian, is just what alienated from him a later generation in which people of taste were aesthetes and virtuous people were higher snobs; they wanted a mincing art, and he gave them copious improvisation, they wanted analysis and development, and he gave them absolute comedy. I must confess, though the fault is mine and not his, that sometimes his absoluteness is too much for me. When I come to the death of Little Nell, or to *What the Waves were always Saying*, or even to the incorrigible perversities of the pretty Dora, I skip. I can't take my liquor neat in such draughts, and my inner man says to Dickens, Please don't. But then I am a coward in so many ways! There are so many things in this world that I skip, as I skip the undiluted Dickens! When I reach Dover on a rough day, I wait there until the Channel is smoother; am I not travelling for pleasure? But my prudence does not blind me to the admirable virtues of the sailors that cross in all weathers, nor even to the automatic determination of the seasick ladies, who might so easily have followed my example, if they were not the slaves of their railway tickets and of their labelled luggage. They are loyal to their tour, and I to my philosophy. Yet as wrapped in my ulster and sure of a good dinner, I pace the windy pier and soliloquize, I feel the superiority of the bluff tar, glad of breeze, stretching a firm arm to the unsteady passenger, and watching with a masterful thrill of emotion the home cliffs receding and the foreign coasts ahead. It is only courage (which Dickens had without knowing it) and universal kindness (which he knew he had) that are requisite to nerve us for a true vision of this world. And as some of us are cowards about crossing the Channel, and others about "crossing the bar," so almost everybody is a coward about his own humanity. We do not consent to be absurd, though absurd we are. We have no fundamental humility. For that reason we don't like Dickens, and don't like comedy, and don't like the truth. We do not wish the moments of our lives to be caught by a quick eye in their grotesque initiative, and to be pilloried in this way before our own eyes. Dickens could don the comic mask with innocent courage; he could wear it with a grace, ease, and irresistible vivacity seldom given to men. We must go back for anything like it to the very greatest comic poets, to Shakespeare or to Aristophanes. Who else, for instance, could have penned this:

"'It was all Mrs Bumble. She *would* do it,' urged Mr Bumble; first looking round to ascertain that his partner had left the room.

'That is no excuse,' replied Mr Brownlow. 'You were present on the occasion of the destruction of these trinkets, and indeed are the more guilty of the two, in the eye of the law; for the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction.'

'If the law supposes that,' said Mr Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, 'the law is a ass, a idiot. If that's the eye of the law, the law is a bachelor; and the worst I wish the law is, that his eye may be opened by experience—by experience.'

Laying great stress on the repetition of these two words, Mr Bumble fixed his hat on very tight, and putting his hands in his pockets, followed his helpmate down stairs."

This is high comedy; the irresistible, absurd, intense dream of the old fool, personifying the law in order to convince and to punish it. I can understand that this sort of thing should not be common in English literature, nor much relished; because pure comedy is scornful, merciless, devastating, holding no door open to anything beyond. Cultivated English feeling winces at this brutality, although the common people love it in clowns and in puppet shows; and I think they are right. Dickens, who surely was tender enough, had so irresistible a comic genius that it carried him beyond the gentle humour which most Englishmen possess to the absolute grotesque reality. Squeers, for instance, when he sips the wretched dilution which he has prepared for his starved and shivering little pupils, smacks his lips and cries: "Here's richness!" It is savage comedy; humour would come in if we understood (what Dickens does not tell us) that the little creatures were duly impressed and thought the thin liquid truly delicious. I suspect that English sensibility prefers the humour and wit of Hamlet to the pure comedy of Falstaff; and that even in Aristophanes it seeks consolation in the lyrical poetry for the flaying of human life in the comedy itself. Tastes are free; but we should not deny that in merciless and rollicking comedy life is caught in the act. The most grotesque creatures of Dickens are not exaggerations or mockeries of something other than themselves; they arise because nature generates them, like toadstools; they exist because they can't help it, as we all do. The fact that these perfectly self-justified beings are absurd appears only by comparison, and from outside; circumstances, or the expect-

tations of other people, make them ridiculous and force them to contradict themselves; but in nature it is no crime to be exceptional. Often, but for the savagery of the average man, it would not even be a misfortune. The sleepy fat boy in *Pickwick* looks foolish; but in himself he is no more foolish, nor less solidly self-justified, than a pumpkin lying on the ground. Toots seems ridiculous; and we laugh heartily at his incoherence, his beautiful waistcoats, and his extreme modesty; but when did anybody more obviously grow into what he is because he couldn't grow otherwise? So with Mr *Pickwick*, and Sam Weller, and Mrs Gamp, and Micawber, and all the rest of this wonderful gallery; they are ridiculous only by accident, and in a context in which they never intended to appear. If Oedipus and Lear and Cleopatra do not seem ridiculous, it is only because tragic reflection has taken them out of the context in which, in real life, they would have figured. If we saw them as facts, and not as emanations of a poet's dream, we should laugh at them till doomsday; what grotesque presumption, what silly whims, what mad contradiction of the simplest realities! Yet we should not laugh at them without feeling how real their griefs were; as real and terrible as the griefs of children and of dreams. But facts, however serious inwardly, are always absurd outwardly; and the just critic of life sees both truths at once, as Cervantes did in *Don Quixote*. A pompous idealist who does not see the ridiculous in *all* things is the dupe of his sympathy and abstraction; and a clown, who does not see that these ridiculous creatures are living quite in earnest, is the dupe of his egotism. Dickens saw the absurdity, and understood the life; I think he was a good philosopher.

It is usual to compare Dickens with Thackeray, which is like comparing the grape with the gooseberry; there are obvious points of resemblance, and the gooseberry has some superior qualities of its own; but you can't make red wine of it. The wine of Dickens is of the richest, the purest, the sweetest, the most fortifying to the blood; there is distilled in it, with the perfection of comedy, the perfection of morals. I do not mean, of course, that Dickens appreciated all the values that human life has or might have; that is beyond any man. Even the greatest philosophers, such as Aristotle, have not always much imagination to conceive forms of happiness or folly other than those which their age or their temperament reveals to them; their insight runs only to discovering the *principle* of happiness, that it is spontaneous life of any sort har-

monized with circumstances. The sympathies and imagination of Dickens, vivid in their sphere, were no less limited in range; and of course it was not his business to find philosophic formulas; nevertheless I call his the perfection of morals for two reasons; that he put the distinction between good and evil in the right place, and that he felt this distinction intensely. A moralist might have excellent judgement, he might see what sort of life is spontaneous in a given being and how far it may be harmonized with circumstances, yet his heart might remain cold, he might not suffer nor rejoice with the suffering or joy he foresaw. Humanitarians like Bentham and Mill, who talked about the greatest happiness of the greatest number, might conceivably be moral prigs in their own persons, and they might have been chilled to the bone in their theoretic love of mankind, if they had had the wit to imagine in what, as a matter of fact, the majority would place their happiness. Even if their theory had been correct (which I think it was in intention, though not in statement) they would then not have been perfect moralists, because their maxims would not have expressed their hearts. In expressing their hearts, they ought to have embraced one of those forms of "idealism" by which men fortify themselves in their bitter passions or in their helpless commitments; for they do not wish mankind to be happy in its own way, but in theirs. Dickens was not one of those moralists who summon every man to do himself the greatest violence so that he may not offend them, nor defeat their ideals. Love of the good of others is something that shines in every page of Dickens with a truly celestial splendour. How entirely limpid is his sympathy with life—a sympathy uncontaminated by dogma or pedantry or snobbery or bias of any kind! How generous is this keen, light spirit, how pure this open heart! And yet, in spite of this extreme sensibility, not the least wobbling; no deviation from a just severity of judgement, from an uncompromising distinction between white and black. And this happens as it ought to happen; sympathy is not checked by a flatly contrary prejudice or commandment, by some categorical imperative irrelevant to human nature; the check, like the cheer, comes by tracing the course of spontaneous impulse amid circumstances that inexorably lead it to success or to failure. There is a bed to this stream, freely as the water may flow; when it comes to this precipice it must leap, when it runs over these pebbles it must sing, and when it

spreads into that marsh it must become livid and malarial. The very sympathy with human impulse quickens in Dickens the sense of danger; his very joy in joy makes him stern to what kills it. How admirably drawn are his surly villains! No rhetorical vilification of them, as in a sermon; no exaggeration of their qualms or fears; rather a sense of how obvious and human all their courses seem from their own point of view; and yet no sentimental apology for them, no romantic worship of rebels in their madness or crime. The pity of it, the waste of it all, are seen not by a second vision but by the same original vision which revealed the lure and the drift of the passion. Vice is a monster here of such sorry mien, that the longer we see it the more we deplore it; that other sort of vice which Pope found so seductive was perhaps only some innocent impulse artificially suppressed, and called a vice because it broke out inconveniently and displeased the company. True vice is human nature strangled by the suicide of attempting the impossible. Those so self-justified villains of Dickens never elude their fates. Bill Sykes is not let off, neither is Nancy; the oddly benevolent Magwitch does not escape from the net, nor does the unfortunate young Richard Carstone, victim of the Circumlocution Office. The horror and ugliness of their fall are rendered with the hand of a master; we see here, as in the world, that in spite of the romanticists it is not virtue to rush enthusiastically along any road. I think Dickens is one of the best friends mankind has ever had. He has held the mirror up to nature, and of its reflected fragments has composed a fresh world, where the men and women differ from real people only in that they live in a literary medium, so that all ages and places may know them. And they are worth knowing, just as one's neighbours are, for their picturesque characters and their pathetic fates. Their names should be in every child's mouth; they ought to be adopted members of every household. Their stories cause the merriest and the sweetest chimes to ring in the fancy, without confusing our moral judgement nor alienating our interest from the motley commonplaces of daily life. In every English-speaking home, in the four quarters of the globe, parents and children will do well to read Dickens aloud of a winter's evening; they will love winter, and one another, and God the better for it. What a wreath that will be of ever-fresh holly, thick with bright berries, to hang to this poet's memory—the very crown he would have chosen!

IN A FAR LAND

BY PADRAIC COLUM

I

The crows still fly to that wood, and out of that wood she comes,
Carrying her load of sticks, a little less now than before,
Her strength being less; she bends as the hoar rush bends in the
wind:

She will sit by the fire, in the smoke, her thoughts on the root and
the living branch no more.

The crows still fly to that wood, that wood that is sparse and
gapped;

The last one left of the herd makes way by the lane to the stall,
Lowing distress as she goes; the great trees there are all down;
No fiddle sounds in the hut to-night, and a candle only gives light
to the hall.

The trees are sparse and gapped, yet a sapling spreads on the
joints

Of the wall till the Castle stones fall down into the moat;

The last who minds that our race once stood as a spreading tree,
She goes, and the thorns are bare where the blackbird, his summer
songs done, strikes the one metal note.

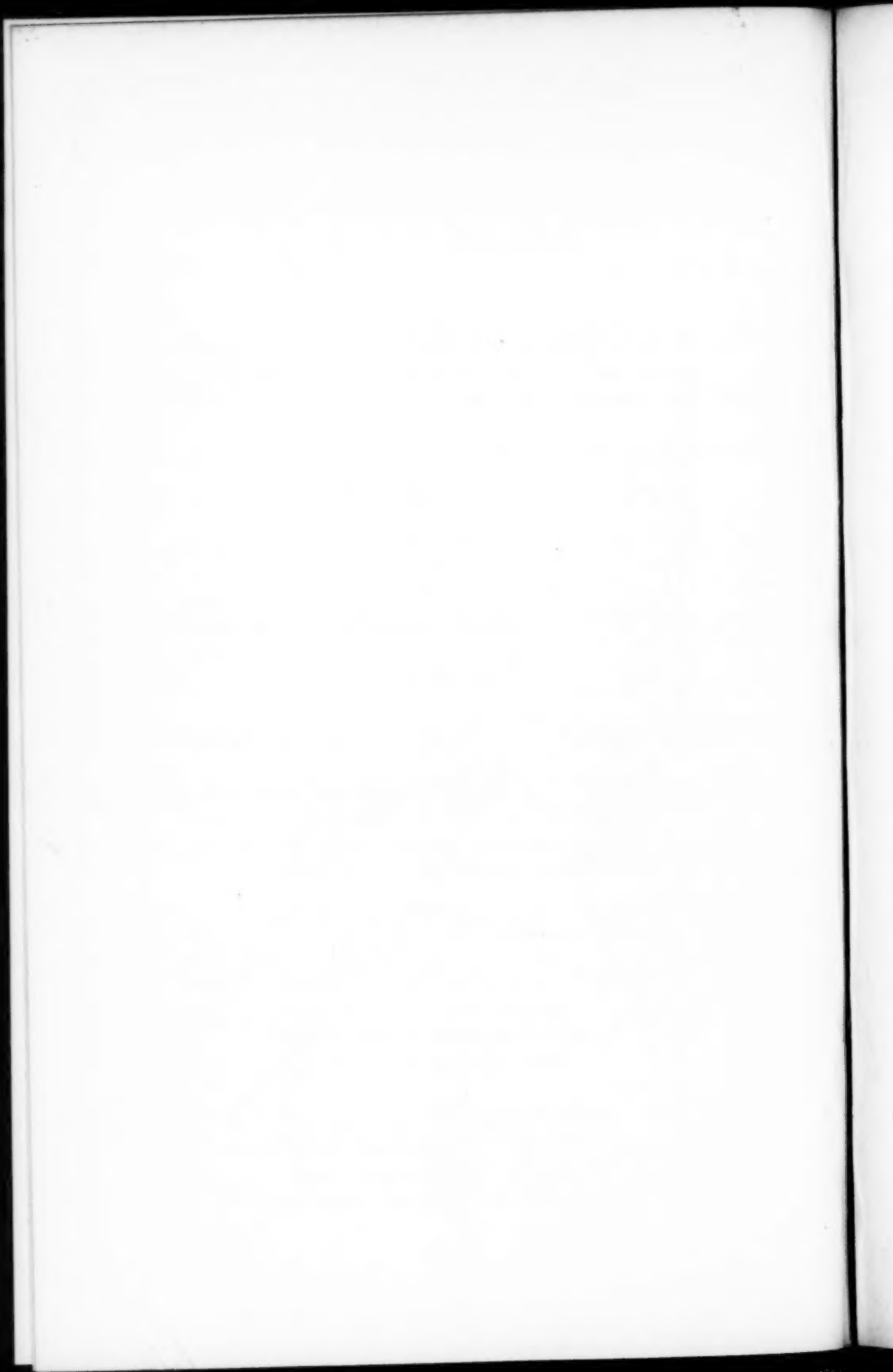
II

The bond-woman comes to the boorie;
She sings with a heart beguiled
How a hundred rivers are flowing
Between herself and her child.

Then comes the lad with the hazel,
And the folding-star's in the rack:
"Night's a good herd," to the cattle
He sings, "She brings all things back."



RAIN IN THE FACE



POEMS

BY MARY AUSTIN

WOMEN'S WAR THOUGHTS

A room in Time from which a window looks on the Present.

THE TRUMPETS:

Wake, O Women!

A WOMAN AT THE WINDOW:

Oh, no more for women

Shall the trumpets tear their throats!

No more the white riders,

Strong thewed and breastless

Come reiving and raiding.

We modern women are undone by our own preciousness.

Like viols of few strings

Plucked at by lovers in their silken intervals,

Live in the prelude to our womanness.

Our music seldom swings

From the apassionata's opening phrases

Into the star-built theme of mastery.

Not even like the Spartan women,

Guardians of the Gate whereby life entering is made man

By virtue of that clean divinity

That lives in women's flesh.

Not ours to turn,

Whose sons return not

Borne on their shields or bearing them,

To rear a sterner offspring to our conquerors.

Trumpets sound, and summoning drums.

Our sons are too much ours!

Too much the child, that means,

Too prone to keep us
The condoning lap, the leaned on bosom,
The ever pleased spectator of their plays
Filling the gaps with ready make believe.

We talk of giving,
Who cannot throb to world adventure
Save through the still unsevered stalk of being.
Who suffer, deep in the womb of our affection,
Perpetual pangs of parturition.

Suddenly the drums
Quicken the male pulse of the world,
The questing trumpets
Seek out the part of them that is not us,
And with a sword
Time heals us of a too prolonged maternity.

*Flags go by, and the tips of bayonets, passing the window
in full procession.*

Strange they should look so much alike!

I cannot find my son's
Among the lean brown shanks,
Crossing and uncrossing like the shears of Atropos
To cut the thread of over-ripe autocracy.
Nor trace the alien strains
Gave rise to that steel glinting river,
Frothed bright with banners.

What tongues do trumpets speak,
Welding all men into one moving unit?

Women are welded at heart
By the rhythm of rocking cradles.
World-wide, they are starting awake to feel if one is well covered,
Who at that moment may be lying stark in the trenches.
Women of any nation,
For the sake of a long sheared curl
Between two leaves of a prayer book,
Will weep on each other's shoulders.

But the word of the trumpet to men
Is the seed of a forthright intention.

The drums go by, and the Allied banners.

When I was young, my son,
I dreamed of a life exempted as yours is to-day,
From the claims of the past and the present,
A tiny, two-penny candle to burn on the altar of Now.

But the cant of a world made sleek by soul stroking phrases,
Offered your life for mine.
As though your life were a thing I could make
For my soul's diversion,
To dangle before my mind
And quiet its hunger.
Oh, my son, how times like these give the lie
To that smug maternal illusion!

VOICES OF YOUNG SOLDIERS (*singing*):

Land, my Land!
Thy sons are going
Where like a wind from the west we feel God blowing
Kings from their seats and Empire from its stays.
Land where the Vision blessed our fathers,
Perfect in us thy praise!

THE WOMAN (*repeating the word of the inner Voice*):

. . . You are no more to the making
Than the nozzle is to the fountain.
I am the source and the stream
And the deeps to which I have called him.
I will drink up the life of your son
To quicken my harvest.
I will take up his life and lay it
To the lips of my larger purpose,
Trumpeting forth my power,
And my will to Freedom . . .

YOUNG SOLDIERS (*singing*):

Land, my Land!
Thy sons go singing

Forth to the work of our God, our lives free flinging
 Nothing withholden or scamped, for thy sake;
 Land, by whose voice the larger Freedom
 Has called the world awake!

THE WOMAN (*muses*):

Life that passed through us,
 Did it leave no tang of the man strain, mordant, unruly . . .

The Red Cross nurses go by.

Yonder the barren women . . .
 Women whose breasts are scarcely grown
 But whose hearts are steadied with skill,
 Will sit on the Pit's red edge
 And hold back death with laughter.

Bite back the moan in your throat, O my son,
 If the shrapnel tears you.

Lest the unwed women say
 I was too woman-soft when I shaped you,
 I that am left to hand-waving, balcony service!

The music grows faint in the distance.

Why should we weep
 Who taught them to follow the music;
 We who attuned them
 To feints, pursuits, and surprises?
 Have we ever denied them the game that we should wonder
 When they go roaring forth to hunt one another?

Blood . . .

There is no virtue in blood . . .
 Any woman will tell you!

Torn flesh . . . and a gay endurance . . .
 I did as much for you in the bearing.
 War is a sickness sucked from your shiny toy maleness.
 When your teeth have met on hard metal awhile
 You will be cured of your sickness.

. . . And then

We will go back to our playing,
Sally, retreat, and ambush, handling and stroking,
Till Peace is choked with the rising scum
Of our passionate prepossessions.

Was it you or I, son,
Made this war, I wonder!

GLYPHS

Rendered from the Amerind

I

Your face is strange
And the fashion of your garments,
But your soul to mine is familiar.
As if in dreams
We had visited one another.
Often
From unremembering sleep
I come delicately glowing.
Now I know
What my heart has been doing.

Now I know why when we met
It slipped so easily into loving.

II

A girl wearing a green ribbon,
As if it had been my girl;
(The green ribbon I gave her for remembrance)
Knowing it was not my girl,
Suddenly,
Such was the magic of the ribbon,
My girl existed inside me.

AFTER THE MURDER

BY LOCKIE PARKER

THE taste of dust was in the air already at eight o'clock in the morning, but still they kept coming—the little black buggies and rattling wagons. Down the Anton turnpike they came and up from the East Road. A few from the rich country around Manitou came in automobiles and some from the rough country up north of the mines rode in on horseback. Still there was not as big a crowd as you would have expected; for most of the vehicles contained only one man. Nobody brought his wife or children, and they had come too suddenly to think of inviting friends and neighbours.

It was wonderful how fast the news had travelled. It had reached the most remote parts of the county almost before daylight of the short November day. Old Biggs on his way into town saw young Jo Stevens mending fences down in his wheat field. Jo had been out since dawn and had heard nothing. Old Biggs stopped to tell him. "A nigger shot the sheriff last night. Emptied a shot gun into his belly." Jo listened and went on working, but ever so often he raised his eyes and looked uneasily in the direction the other had disappeared. Finally he picked up his tools and went towards the house. He stopped for a drink at the well and his wife came out. He rubbed his hand awkwardly across his chin and told her the news. She had heard it already. He nodded, rubbed his chin again, and said he thought he'd go to town.

"You'd much better stay where you are, Jo Stevens!" she answered in a loud, angry tone.

He said nothing to this, but presently he went down to the barn and harnessed the team—the horses needed shoeing anyway.

In town the news was slower spreading. People slept later there and were more absorbed in their own affairs. They wouldn't thank you for waking them before dawn even with news like that. A good many of them didn't hear it until they went to the post-office for their morning mail. Editor Andrews and Lawyer Hunt met at the usual corner and went into the post-office, slapping each

other on the back and laughing at the same joke they had been using all summer. They came out separately and both looked serious and tired and had deeper lines in their faces than you had noticed there before.

In the square, the crowd was already getting thick. The homely, familiar square, its ugly red brick court-house with the squat pillars and cheese-box cupola, the little squares of green, precisely marked off by cement walks, the nondescript roof line of the buildings beyond—the Blue Front grocery, the Grand Leader, the new concrete garage, and the gaudy bills of a burlesque show to begin that night—all had a false, flat look like the back-drop of a theatre. Everyone faced this and watched and waited uneasily. The centre of attention was a black knot of a score or more men, county officials and friends of the dead man, standing near the front steps of the court-house. They were consulting together and occasionally one of them went into the court-house or hurried off on some errand.

The mood of the crowd, at first, was varied. There were the spruce clerks from the department stores, who merely kicked their heels in the frosty air and looked blank. Down by the bank a few negroes were standing apart from the crowd, not talking even to each other. Their faces looked heavy and sullen and, though their patient eyes never ceased to follow the movements of the group by the court-house, they seemed to expect but one outcome. No one approached them or seemed to take any notice of them whatever. The rest of the crowd, town loafers, half-grown boys, and farmers of all sorts—some who hadn't been seen in the town for weeks and months—formed a ragged fringe to the central group and straggled all over the square. It was odd the people this event had unearthed. Men were there who never so much as showed their faces at the county fair, whom not even a circus attracted, men whom the most sensational revivalist could not have budged from their barns and furrows, and men too indifferent to public affairs to come out even for election. Some extraordinarily strong instinct, prejudice, passion, was at work here. If any one stayed home, it was the careful, substantial farmers, the prudent souls, the complacent, who detested violence and asked only that all disturbing issues pass them by.

The crowd was not attractive to look at. No one was dressed up or even cleaned up, as on most occasions when they gathered together. They wore drab, shapeless, dirty work-clothes. Most of

them had lined, weathered faces with a prominent bony structure, lank, slow-moving limbs, pale eyes, and long, unshaven chins. The expression was almost invariably the same—vague, unfocussed, waiting. They moved aimlessly about or stood on the curb and chewed tobacco—waiting.

There were no women in the crowd—this was tacitly admitted to be a man's affair. There was, in fact, not a woman to be seen on the whole square, which was rather remarkable at this time of morning. But the women were talking of it. Standing by back fences, their checked aprons rolled up about their bare arms, they were asking each other how many small children the dead man had left and whether there was any property or insurance. And they told, or were told, that his wife was expecting another child. Then they shook their heads gravely and looked towards town where their men were.

About nine, someone reported that the negro had been seen crossing the railroad tracks and making for Grapevine woods. This relieved matters a little. The surcharged atmosphere became less painful, men moved a bit more briskly. The negro was reported to be heavily armed. Volunteers were called for to surround Grapevine woods and possibly search them. All of the young fellows were eager to go and a few of the old ones whose blood still ran hot. A surprising number of pistols and other weapons were speedily collected to equip them and about a hundred set off. This made a change in the crowd, the knot in front of the court-house disappeared, but the straggling fringe remained much the same. It was these that Lawyer Hunt watched uneasily from his window, his ruddy face and bright blue eyes wearing an incongruous air of depression. Farther up the street, Editor Andrews sat at his desk, writing a long editorial, entitled *Let the Law Take its Course*. Both of them kept pretty closely within doors, and one of them was thinking that if—well, if anything did happen, the sheriff himself had been the only person really capable of handling such a situation.

Presently old Jim Wilts was seen coming up the street. He had been one of the last persons to hear about it. He had a night job and slept until the middle of the morning and, even when he woke, his negro servant had told him nothing of it. It was only after breakfast, when he sat on the front steps lighting his pipe, that a

neighbour woman passed and told him. He had started for town at once and, when he arrived, he still held his pipe halfway to his mouth, as though his arm had been petrified in the uncompleted gesture. His good, kindly face was all wrinkled up with concern. He went into Lawyer Hunt's office and said, "John, what about this?" But the lawyer was inclined to be rather short and didn't want to talk about it. He went back to the street and walked about, talking now to this one, now to that, even approaching the negroes in his everyday, friendly manner. What he said was bromidic, the purest commonplaces, but nobody repulsed him. Some nodded and walked away to get their dinners. This seemed to encourage him. A few of the more serious and intelligent young farmers got their horses and went home, but the total effect was negligible, and this was the only effort made to restore normality, if we except that editorial—which was not yet printed.

Now and then a rumour started that the negro had been seen in the woods, or boarding a freight, or in half a dozen entirely different places. Everyone had his description now. It was as though it were painted on all the signboards and blank walls in town, like a circus bill, so familiar and vivid had it suddenly become—a heavy, black negro, with receding forehead, prominent lower jaw, an exaggeratedly flat nose and thick lips, medium height, long arms, and a finger gone from his right hand. He was wearing khaki trousers, an old red sweater, and a cap. He was heavily armed. The crowd fixed its attention on this image and waited.

About two, they heard that the watchers, tired of waiting, were going to beat through the woods. Men's eyes lighted, they nodded their heads with approval, and talked more than they had done that day. The confidence that he was in the woods grew and they assured each other that *the nigger* would be in town before night. They even cracked jokes about it and laughed grimly. Laughter!—how odd it sounded after the oppression of the morning. The department store clerks came out to look and Lawyer Hunt opened his window. Jim Wilts, who had been talking with a young farmer, took his pipe out of his mouth and stared at them in amazement.

After that, for a long time, no news came, and the crowd grew restless. A murmur started and swelled ominously. At four, they brought in from the woods a boy who had sprained his ankle. No news yet and the strain was beginning to tell on men's tempers.

They were restless and irritable with each other. In one case, there was almost a fight.

At five, suddenly the hunters returned in a bunch—very tired, very dispirited. They had gone over every inch of the woods and not a sign. Men looked at each other blankly. No one seemed to have been prepared for this issue. It quite took the wind from their sails and abruptly they lost faith in all the other rumours. They seemed to feel that they had been finally cheated and, one by one, they drifted off spiritlessly to get their horses and start home.

In the dusk, the roads were full of them, a procession of solitary drivers behind patient horses, and each man wore the same expression—wistful, puzzled, *thwarted*.



A HEAD. BY ADOLPH DEHN



LA VIE EN FLEUR

BY ANATOLE FRANCE

II

THOUGHTS ABOUT HAPPINESS

ONE morning Fontanet came to tell me that an intimate friend of his, a lady of riches and title who gave magnificent parties and entertained the most beautiful women in Paris, had asked him to bring men who danced to her balls and he had immediately thought of me. I told him that I did not know how to dance. This was a fact; Fontanet knew it, and had invited me for the pleasure of hearing me say so.

Several days later Fontanet informed me that he was taking lessons at a riding academy and that he was soon going to go for a ride in the Bois with some friends. He invited me to hire a horse and come along. I liked horses, but I had no money. I declined. Fontanet pretended to misunderstand my motive.

"You're silly; the stable would give you a perfectly tame horse, that you needn't be afraid of."

At that time I used to see in the windows of Verdier's famous shop on the Boulevard des Capucines a malacca cane with a lapis lazuli head; I was drawn to it by an emotion that in tenderness and violence was not far from love. It was handsome, too! I was destined never to see it, except through the shop window. The Boulevard des Capucines was then very smart and Verdier's shop was expensive to a degree that forbade my entering it.

I was far from being a good-looking young man and what was worse I lacked assurance. This spoiled my chances with women. The beautiful ones, the most feminine, I mean, I loved desperately, and the excitement with which they affected me, robbed me when with them of all my faculties, so that I got along only with the ugly ones, whom I regarded with horror. For I believed that a woman's greatest sin is to be not beautiful. I observed that in society many young men who were inferior to myself succeeded in pleasing better

than I. I was not consoled, but I was already old enough not to be surprised.

It was in such circumstances that I learned that nature and fortune had not favoured me, and my first impulse was of self-pity. I have always believed that the only reasonable thing to do is to look for pleasure, and if, as seemed likely, I was ill fitted to succeed in this quest, I had, like La Fontaine's reed, good reason for reproaching nature. But I soon made an important discovery: it is not difficult to tell whether a man is happy or unhappy. Joy and grief are what one hides the least, especially when one is young. After a rapid survey I perceived that my friends, though better looking and better off than I, were not happier, and on looking closer, that life brought me satisfactions which were unknown to them. Their barren, unhappy talk, their worried, nervous ways, were proof enough. I was light-hearted, they were not; my thoughts ran easily and freely while theirs dragged on the ground. From this I concluded that, if my disgrace was indeed real, something good in my nature or condition must compensate for the evil. First I observed the difference in our characters and saw that the passions of my friends were violent where mine were gentle, and that they suffered from theirs whereas I enjoyed mine. They were jealous, spiteful, ambitious. I was indulgent and peaceful; I did not know ambition. Here was no reason for my thinking too highly of myself. Violent passions are what great men are made of, there is none of that stuff in me; but this is outside the question anyway. I have confined myself to describing how I came to see that my passions, very different from those of the majority of men, afforded me peace and a sort of happiness. I was much longer in discovering that my situation in life, in spite of numerous disadvantages, had its compensations. I am speaking of course about a condition of mediocrity like my own, not of that state of misery which can break the most courageous. The lack of money deprived me of a multitude of pleasant things, which are not always appreciated by those who can get them, but which would have ministered to my sensuality. Desire is no doubt importunate, and sometimes cruel. I saw that right away. But what I saw after long observation was that while desire embellishes the objects on which it rests its fiery wings, the satisfaction of desire is as often as not a betrayal and ruins illusion, man's only genuine asset; and kills desire which alone gives charm to life. All my

desires were for beauty and I recognized that this love of beauty, which unlike the majority of men I felt so keenly, is a well-spring of pleasure and joy. These successive discoveries were invaluable to me. They persuaded me that my character and estate did not at all forbid my aspiration to happiness.

One thing which my youth, small experience, and sheltered life kept me from seeing, was the fickleness of fortune, fortune which triumphs over the firmest characters and changes in an instant the estates of men.

O Thébains! Jusqu'au jour qui termine la vie
Ne regardons personne avec un oeil d'envie.
Peut-on jamais prévoir les derniers coups du sort?
Ne proclamons heureux nul homme avant sa mort.

The first example I had of the vicissitudes of fortune was not one of the most tragic; I recall it, nevertheless, because it made a very strong impression on me. It came to me in this way.

One day in a café of the rue Soufflot where I was waiting for Fontanet, I recognized at a nearby table Joseph Vernier, the young aeronaut whom I had heard six years before deliver a lecture, at Grenelle, applauded by a large audience. Two members of the Institute, superhumanly ugly, resembling the two cynocephaloi which flanked the corpse in the funeral rites of ancient Egypt, were seated on the platform on either side of the lecturer; a lady in a green dress had given him a bouquet of flowers. He was pale like Bonaparte, and I was admiringly envious of his glory and his honours. To-day Joseph Vernier was writing a letter on a restaurant table, chewing the while at a penny cigar. His linen was soiled, his coat shabby, his trousers threadbare, his shoes down at heel, his complexion flushed, his hand feverish. What, was this the young hero I had envied and wanted to imitate? Alas, what had become of the two cynocephaloi of the Institut de France, the green lady, the enthusiastic crowd, the flowers, the acclamations? When Fontanet appeared I told him in a low voice who our neighbour was and by what exploits he had distinguished himself.

"Joseph Vernier! I know him," said Fontanet with assurance.

I was very sure that he did not know him even by name and that he was seeing him for the first time. Nevertheless, as soon as

Joseph Vernier stopped writing, Fontanet turned in his direction, greeted him, and asked him when he was going to make another flight.

"I don't go up any more," replied the aeronaut in a weary voice. "I cannot find the money to build with. Nobody understands the great advantages of my sort of balloon; they find fault with my propeller and say it's fragile; but a propeller has got to be light. I have been turned down. Everything is done now for Tissandier and Nadar. I have just written a letter to the ministry but it will go unanswered like the others."

He made a gesture as if to brush away the worries that assailed him, bowed his head, and was silent.

Incapable as I was of discerning whether or not Joseph Vernier had the character and talents for success, I saw in him a wretch betrayed by fortune, and this spectacle which was a new one to me filled me with grief and foreboding.

THE CHOICE OF A CAREER

I had to choose a career for myself without delay. My parents were not rich enough to keep me for long. The thought of my future worried and alarmed me. I foresaw at once that I should not easily find a place in a society where one must push oneself forward with one's elbows; that was an art of which I was ignorant.

I saw that I was different from others without knowing whether it was for good or for ill, and this frightened me. Finally I was grievously surprised to see my parents leaving me without advice or direction as though they could find no suitable employment for me. I consulted Fontanet who had already entered himself at the Law School. He advised me to prepare myself for the bar, certain as he was that I should be less successful there than he. And certainly with the penny horn which he had in his throat and all the various facts from newspapers pasted up in his brain he was sure to make as good a lawyer as another. At first glance the bar did not displease me. I was fond of eloquence. I told myself: I shall brilliantly defend a young widow who will fall in love with me. For I brought everything back to love.

By way of going over the ground, I accompanied Fontanet to the

Law School. I was an amateur of the antiquities and illustrious haunts of my city, and I inhaled respectfully the dust of the learned hill.

When we were at the end of the rue Soufflot, we entered the beautiful square flanked on our right hand and on our left by the strong façades of the Mairie and the Law School. Above stood the majestic Pantheon and its perfectly curving dome. On our left, the Library of Sainte-Geneviève, its solid walls covered with inscriptions, seemed less a building consecrated to study than a vast mausoleum copied from antiquity. At the end, the royal church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont spread pompously the jewelled fretwork of its façade, and the cloister of the Génovéfains raised its ancient deformed ogives. O centuries! O memories! O august monuments of generations gone!

But Fontanet was in no humour to stand gaping at stones and he pushed me into the great amphitheatre where Professor Demangeat was teaching Roman law.

Numerous students were listening to him in profound silence and making notes so rapidly that they seemed to take down every word.

"Old Bugnet gives the same course," said Fontanet, "but he has few students. He is a dirty old fellow. He runs at the nose perpetually and wipes it with a red handkerchief as big as a sheet. Demangeat's courses are well attended, as you see, and much appreciated."

This Demangeat did not please me particularly. I found his voice mealy and his delivery monotonous. I was right. But with more intelligence I should have understood that the students properly appreciated the orderly clearness of his statements.

Fontanet who knew no rest for himself or for others, took me breathlessly from the big amphitheatre to the room where the candidates were passing the examination for their degrees. The examiners there went about their work with considerable solemnity and in a manner calculated to impress the imagination. With their robes on they sat at a table, the green cover of which fell in ample folds; they sat three together like the judges of Hell and overbore the shrunken and flattened candidate before them. The judge at the centre of the table was voluminous, important, and filthy. It was he who was asking questions when we entered the room. He evidently thought only of displaying his power and making himself

redoubtable. He lent his questions an imposing solemnity, he enveloped them at times in formidable obscurity, like that cruel virgin the Sphinx, and he uttered them in the voice of a bull, to which the candidate replied with weak and trembling sighs. The judge at the right next took up the questioning. He was small, thin, green like a paroquet, and spoke in a sharp voice that came out on top of his head. As far as one could see he conducted his examination less to find out about the candidate than to riddle his fat colleague with sarcasm. He referred to him without using his name, and they exchanged venomous glances with propriety. The three judges hated one another exclusively; they had no other hatreds. Satisfied with having made the candidate tremble, they accepted him; everything finished without tears or gnashing of teeth. To make it a full day we went to see an examination at the Medical School. This was quite another matter. The candidate, fat and bald, seemed to be no longer particularly young. He cut hesitatingly with his knife at a sneering body stretched before him, the little body of an old man. A professor with moustaches like a Tartar's, lying in an arm-chair, was saying to the student:

"Well, how about that gland? Is it for to-day or for to-morrow?"

He received no answer. His two assistants wrote letters or corrected proofs. One of them was wearing an unusual cap of extraordinary size, trimmed with fur, more like a *chapska* than a cap. Fontanet told me it was the model for a head-dress designed in 1792 by Louis David. It had been kept in a glass case at the school, but this professor had demanded it from an employee in a tone which allowed no refusal. The examiner, his head lower than his heels, asked again:

"How about that gland?"

This time he received an answer.

"It is atrophied."

To which the professor replied that it was the body's fault, that he would give the body a bad mark.

And yet in spite of the carelessness and indifference of the professors, this examination was obviously at bottom more serious than the law examination which we had just seen; the gravity of science relieved the absurdity.

I left the examination room with a mild desire to study medi-

cine. This desire was indeed not firm enough to force me to undertake the long and difficult courses in which I was not prepared. Fearing that, like the fat student, I might come to the end of my youth without finding the gland in the neck of the mocking body, I gave up my project almost before it was formed.

I have since often regretted this. I know nothing in the world more beautiful than the life of a Claude Bernard, and I know country doctors the fulness and kindness of whose lives makes me jealous. My father practised his profession with rigorous enthusiasm; but he did not intend it for me.

During dinner I decided to study law; but at night when I was alone and quiet in my room, I told myself forcibly that miserly nature had refused me the precious gift of speech, that I had not once been able to improvise four words, and that if there was one thing for ever beyond me it was the delivery of a speech in court. As I did not dream for many reasons of making myself a consulting attorney, a judge, or a notary, I understood that my law studies would require useless sacrifice on the part of my family and I gave up the mastery of the Institutes of Justinian and the Napoleonic Code. And simultaneously I regretted not having prepared for Saint-Cyr. It seemed to me that it would be beautiful to be an officer, provided, of course, the officer was Alfred de Vigny's sort, magnanimous and melancholy. I had read *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires* with ardour and admired myself crossing the courtyard of the barracks, with slow steps, taciturn, my heart full of all devotions and all sacrifices, my form wrapped in an elegant dolman. Then we should be informed at mess that war was declared. Preparations would be made with imposing calm and with that resolution which David was able to impart to Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans. We set off. I ride with my men; the roads fly beneath our feet, and with them endless fields, villages, forests, rocks, streams. All at once we encounter the enemy. I fight without hatred. We take prisoners. I treat them humanely and watch to see that their wounded receive the same care as ours. At the second encounter, which is frightful, I am decorated on the field of battle. To tell the truth I make an excellent officer. I am lodged with several comrades in a chateau overlooking the woods, occupied by a lone countess of great beauty whose husband is a general; but he is a brute

and she does not love him. We love each other with a love heart-rending and ravishing. The enemy is beaten, whereupon they all become my dear friends.

The next morning I doubted whether I had pictured military life as it really was.

Fontanet came to see me early and greeted me with that superior air which never left him. He warned me that I must register without delay and said that he would accompany me that same day to the office of the Law School, where they knew him. I begged him to do nothing about it; I said that I was giving up the law and told him why. He would hear nothing of the sort, and assured me that with a little practice I should be pleading as well as any one, that superior faculties were not required. He went often to the Palais; he knew a lawyer there who was the victim of a very nearly complete amnesia but who managed to speak well enough from notes on a piece of paper the size of his hand. He had heard a lawyer, a stutterer with a tongue that tripped constantly, and, who had, in addition, the habit of barking suddenly like a dog, who still defended a hard case very decently and finally won it.

"I don't claim," Fontanet went on, "that you are especially gifted. But one can do marvels with hard work. *Labor improbus* as Crottu said when he was scolding you for being lazy. You must practise speaking, that's the whole secret. Come, try it right away. I'll coach you and you'll be surprised at the way you get along."

I had the misfortune to let him see by too sharp a refusal that this would be disagreeable to me. He already suspected it; when he was sure he became implacable. He pushed the table, the chairs, and even the bed into a disorder that was supposed to represent the tribunal, jostled my books, shuffled my papers, overturned my inkwell, emptied my water pitcher on the carpet, and pushing me violently between the wall and the ravaged dressing table, cried in an imperious voice:

"You stand there! That's the bar. You are the lawyer for the defence. I am the judge; you will begin when I tell you."

He was terrifying.

I was astonished daily at my faculty for finding professions that didn't suit me.

It was a game at which I excelled. For example I thought it would be splendid to be an engineer, to superintend, with the aid of applied mathematics, the construction of bridges, highways, machinery, and to be the soul of thousands of workmen. Engineers enjoyed at that time a position in society which they haven't quite retained. They were less numerous then than they are to-day and earned more money. In comedies at the Odéon the young engineer was seen leading the cotillion at the ball, upsetting the girls' hearts and making a brilliant match. Alas, the bifurcation, in steering me towards the arts, had closed the way to a scientific career. Farewell highways, bridges, mines, and brilliant marriage.

It was necessary to find some other way.

The diplomatic career would have pleased me since it is looked upon with respect; the hope of becoming an ambassador and representing my country in foreign courts would have been a pleasant one. If I cherished such ambitions it was only in order to laugh at my poor self; for I can tell you that if I have been a mocker all my life, I have mocked no one so cruelly as myself, nor with so much delight. In conformity, however, with the precept that every good joke be a short one, I fell back on the consular service and decided on Naples, where I should live in a vine-covered villa, beside the blue sea.

At this time I went to see Mouron who lived with his mother and sisters in a pretty apartment in the rue des Saint-Pères. I found the farmer Chazal there; he had grown a thick cross-grained beard. With pleasure I shook Mouron's little warm hand and Chazal's palm, square-hewn like a bat. Chazal was passing through Paris and in a hurry to get back to Sologne where he was managing an agricultural enterprise. I confided in these two good friends the difficulty I found in choosing a career.

Mouron asked me if I had not considered a government position, especially a position in the Treasury Department, where one might with talent or favour obtain an inspectorship. He advised me to knock at this door. As I promised him to do so, he told me that there was an examination which was not especially difficult; his cousin had passed it easily; a little arithmetic, a knowledge of French, and a good handwriting, he believed, were what was required.

"I advise you," he added, "to go to a coach named Duployer. He is a young fellow, blunt and candid. Everybody who wants to enter

the Treasury service goes to him: he lives at seven or nine rue d'Alger."

Chazal did not agree that I ought to shut myself up in a government office.

"Why should you have to make a prisoner of yourself?" he asked. "Do what I do: cultivate the land. The only good life is in the country. You work hard but you stay healthy. Believe me, the thing for you is cattle breeding. There is nothing more interesting; one is right there at the sources of life. But all work in the country is intoxicating. I had to study variations in the vegetable species. You can't imagine what I found. I have seen monstrous variations spring up suddenly and become fixed in generation after generation. Do you know, I saw a hawthorn in rich soil lose its thorns and multiply its flowers a hundredfold. What about that? It's a fact."

He was beside himself. I found him wilder and stronger than ever. He was growing in vigour, whereas Mouron was shrunken and diminished; but I was at an age where one does not foresee misfortunes.

The following day I went to the little ground floor apartment on the rue d'Alger where Duployer gave lessons. He questioned me about my parents, was very familiar and quite cold at the same time. He said he would put me to work with the son of a prominent official of the Empire, young Fabio Falcone, who was also preparing to take examinations for admission to the Treasury service. After all, nothing else went on at Duployer's place, though he seemed to be running a business office much more than a cramming school. I took lessons for a fortnight, during which time Duployer never gave me the slightest hope of success, although he always showed himself perfectly assured of the future of Falcone who did not excel me in arithmetic, was worse in composition, and had the handwriting of a cat. I understood on what Duployer founded his presentiments. I was obliged to him for this frankness and stopped taking useless lessons. I knew later that I had been right in not presenting myself for an examination the sole purpose of which was to eliminate without fuss the candidates who were not sufficiently recommended.

I continued like Jerome Paturot to seek a position. I could not persuade myself to follow Chazal's advice. I loved the country, I loved it with trembling languor and delicious trouble. I was fated

to love nothing else. In the country I was to pour out the sweetest years of my life. But the time was not yet come.

I could not then consent to quit for ever the city of art and beauty, the stones that sang. I had a good reason, besides, for not cultivating my land: I had no land. But if I could not be a labourer, taught by experience to worship mediocrity, at least I hoped to be a merchant. I came upon this notion while reading some eighteenth century English novels in which the merchants looked quite respectable in their suits of red or maroon cloth, with warehouses full of cases and bales. At the Théâtre-Français I had seen a worthy trader, in a piece by Sedaine, who maintained a great retinue and when at home wore a superb dressing-gown. I had also seen business men in real life who were not bad. But I paid them less attention. Having finally decided to become a dealer or rather a salesman, since I had neither goods nor money to buy with, I looked about to see what sort of business I should go in for. And it was there that the trouble began. Among so many businesses, how was I, knowing neither the advantages nor the disadvantages of any of them, to choose? With a trade directory in hand I asked myself whether I should be a brewer, cement-dealer, coal-dealer, cobbler, coppersmith, gunsmith, jeweller, joiner, landscape-gardener, machinist, marble-cutter, optician, pharmacist, and I found no answer. What lessened my embarrassment, I admit this between ourselves, was that I foresaw that I should be no more capable of selling arms, jewellery, or beer, than of selling coal, kettles, cement, shoes, or spectacles. This reflection relieved me of having to choose, but it made me desperate.

I was put right when I least expected it. This occurred on a Saturday at twenty minutes past four. I was walking on the quai de la Conférence, more rural then than now, more deserted, and more beautiful; I encountered M Louis de Ronchaud who had come from Ternes where he had a little apartment full of books and engravings. I loved him dearly, but seldom went to see him, not thinking my conversation would be interesting to him. Perhaps a few are still living who remember this excellent man. Without knowing them I am in communion with them. Louis de Ronchaud left poems which bore testimony to the beauty of his soul, and books of great merit on Greek art which he loved wisely and with ardour. Lamartine, whose friend he was, consecrated a chapter of his *Cours Familier de Littérature* to him. At the time to which my memories take

me back, M de Ronchaud was no longer young and was not yet old. Those who knew him know that he was not old at any moment in his long life; he never ceased to love. Threads of gold still wandered among the bleached strands of his hair. The delicate skin of his forehead was like pinkish marble. His once fiery moustache had begun to droop. He wore elegantly a suit cut in the French style, covered with spots, and seedy. His voice was warm, his rather heavy manner was pleasant and winning. He told me with enthusiasm about a Roman mosaic just discovered at Lambessa, of which he had received a copy in water-colours. He talked of the Empire and called for and predicted its fall. He seemed curious about some new book, the name of which I no longer remember, which was making a stir. He had already taken leave of me and was walking away, when he had an afterthought.

"I was going to ask you to come to see me," he said, "I must talk to you. I and several friends of mine are publishing with one of the big firms a new *Lives of the Painters*, in parts; it is to replace Charles Blanc's which is no longer adequate. The enterprise is a big one. Will you help us by assembling the various articles, correcting proof, and write something for it yourself if necessary? You would be like the Editor's assistant on a magazine. It will be a lot of work, every day, but it will interest you. The payment is arranged for by the publisher who has a room for you in his building."

Three days later I was filling a very agreeable position and if it was not to last all my life long at least it could help me to find other work to suit my taste; and I was working for a large book-firm in the Faubourg Saint-Germain in a room covered with great photographs of Saskia, of Lavinia, and of *The Man With the Torn Glove*.

M INGRES

I loved the arts passionately. As I had only to cross the Seine to go from my house to the Louvre I went nearly every day and I can say that my youth was spent in a splendid palace. I must do justice to my professors for one thing: they made me understand the Greek genius which they did not understand themselves. I spent long hours at the Campana collection which had just been installed

and in the rooms with the Greek vases which were still generally known as Etruscan. While I studied the decorations painted on them I developed a taste for beauty of form and it was thus that without suspecting it I came to understand the genius of Ingres.

It cannot be said that Ingres gave us back the much misunderstood drawing of the ancients. He did not try to. His methods were those of his time, but there is in Greek art a good taste which can be found again only in him. Enthusiasms are abundant and diverse in a youth of twenty. I admired Delacroix. The chapel of the angels at Saint-Sulpice was a marvel to me and when people said that murals demanded less relief and greater tranquillity I thought that it must be an ecstasy of wonder to put magnificent colonnades, houses, angels, mountains, the heavy foliage of trees, luminous distances, the sky—all in the space of twenty square feet. I thank Heaven that I did not underrate Delacroix.

But Ingres inspired a stronger emotion: love. I knew well that his art was too lofty to be accessible and I was grateful for having penetrated to it. Love alone accomplishes such miracles. I understood his drawing which clinging close to nature achieves perfect beauty; with magnificent gravity I loved this most sensual and voluptuous painting. Ingres lived two hundred feet away from my home, on the quai Voltaire. I knew him by sight. He was more than eighty years old. Age which is a disaster for ordinary mortals is an apotheosis for men of genius. Whenever I met him I used to see him escorted by a *cortège* of his masterpieces, and I was thrilled.

I was in the Théâtre du Châtelet on the night when *The Magic Flute* was sung for the first time by Christine Nilsson. I had an orchestra seat. Long before the curtain rose the theatre was full. I saw M Ingres coming towards me. It was he, his head like a bull, his eyes still black and piercing, his short stature, his powerful gait. It was known that he loved music. I realized that having the *entrée* to the theatre he had come in and was vainly looking for a seat. I was about to offer him mine; he did not give me the chance.

"Young man," he said, "give me your place, I am Monsieur Ingres."

I rose, radiant. The venerable old man had done me the honour of choosing me to give up my place to M Ingres.

There is another painter of the French School who recovered

something of the ancient beauty. It is Poussin; he is classic in the disposition of his scene, in the attitudes and style of his figures. But Ingres alone gives us pagan sensuality in his design. He does not go back to the ancients by the quite uncertain methods of archaeology but by the flight of genius.

MARIE BAGRATION

(Ἦρατο δ' οὐ μάλοις, οὐδὲ ῥόδῳ, οὐδὲ κικλίνοις...)
ΘΕΟΚΡΙΤΟΥ. Κόκκωψ.

I was not much to look at, I danced badly: in conversation my natural tendency was either towards serious ideas or fantastic burlesque, and never towards notions facile or pleasing: I was always at an extreme, being either more stupid or more intelligent than the others, and was equally insufferable in either case; my liking for women was too excessive to be shown and made me timid in their presence; all of these were so many reasons for not getting on in the world. I began to see that I was never invited again to many houses where I had been introduced; there was, however, one *salon* in which I seemed to be not too unwelcome; that of Madame Airiau, wife of the engineer Airiau who was beginning to make his fortune. In her luxurious apartment in the Place Vendôme she received artists, scientists, men of affairs, and women of qualities diverse enough but all enhanced by the glitter of jewels and the majesty of crinolines. I think that many Jews came, but no one noticed it, so little did anti-Semitism exist in France at that time. What do I say? The Jews were highly considered for having filled the highest offices, with the Foulds and the Péreires, in the July Government and in the early days of the Empire. In this *salon* foreigners were welcomed: Turks, Austrians, Germans, English, Spaniards, Italians, and no one found anything to criticize. Paris, under Napoleon III, was the hostelry of the world. Guests from all the countries of the globe were treated with cordial magnificence. Nothing foreshadowed the xenophobia which later darkened the Third Republic, those enmities, those suspicions, the poisoned fruit of defeat which victory, fifty years later, multiplied and which, now, will never die out. What charmed me most in Mme Airiau's *salon* was Mme Airiau, quietly beautiful, slender, delicate, who talked

well and had shown herself sympathetic to me. One evening when I called, I found among several familiars of the house, Turks mostly, a woman whom I did not know and to whom Mme Airiau presented me, the Princess Marie Bagration. I scarcely saw her, my eyes dazzled; I could not say a word. I felt myself suddenly the most miserable of men. In one moment I had lost the use of my senses, of all my faculties, my self-possession, my reason, on account of a woman from whom I felt farther removed than I could be from any other human being. Prompt enough, usually, to seize the detail of a toilette, I saw only that she was dressed in white and wore a pearl necklace, that her arms were bare, but even that was indistinct. Her very gentle splendour hid her from me. Little by little I saw that she had quite dark chestnut hair, her eyes were black and gold, her complexion even, and that she was a large woman, with a figure full and free. I trembled when I heard her voice which caressed and tormented me deliciously, a strange voice, a little barbaric, which sang. I do not know how long I was unable to speak. Without my being aware of it, the *salon* had filled. I found myself next to M Milsent whom I liked much and who was in my confidence. It would be impossible for me to tell what subjects he touched on at first and how he came to speak of the Princess Bagration; the rest of the conversation, on the contrary, has remained with me. When he learned that I had never heard her spoken of he showed his surprise. He himself knew only what everyone said of her, which he summed up:

"She is a Russian princess, separated from her husband who is constantly travelling. She lives," he told me, "in Paris with her mother who drinks ether and whom no one has ever seen. They are supposed to be rich but suspected of not being real Bagrations. The Princess is a sculptor. Her life is mysterious. What do you think of her?"

I could not answer. M Milsent resumed:

"Well, since you have met her, go and call on her. She's at home every day in her studio in the rue Basse-du-Rempart after five o'clock. You meet interesting people there. Turgenev, Monsieur and Madame Viardot, the pianist Alexandre Max, and queer women."

I promised myself that I would not go to see her, I swore it; but I knew very well that I should go and the rue Basse-du-Rempart was already photographed on my brain.

When the Princess took tea I came close to her; I still saw her in a haze and yet with that firmness of line which was her chief characteristic; her movements were broad, a bit brusque, but more rhythmic and more musical than those of other women. What struck me with a sort of terror was the air of indifference upon her features, the beautiful face was shut like a tomb. If, at that time, I had had to define the emotion I felt for this woman I think I would have said: it is hate, but hate as disarmed, as tranquil, and as beautiful as its object. She left early. I experienced, at her departure, an impression that she had not gone from me and that henceforth, wherever she was, she would be close to me. And now, in truth, I saw her more distinctly than I could have in her presence. I rediscovered all of her, her little forehead which met the bridge of her nose in an almost straight line; the disks of her eyes where gold swam deep against a sky which was almost black; the nostrils proud as wings; the lips half-open, the two red arcs meeting for the most beautiful of solitary kisses; the powerful white neck; the breasts far apart on her wide bosom. Yes, I hated her for taking my life without knowing it, for giving me nothing in its place but a phantom, for I had not a moment's illusion that I could be anything to her; at that time I felt a timidity in the presence of women which I was to be a long time curing; but it was not timidity I felt before her; it was fright, terror, a blessed horror. Mme Airiau, when I came to take my leave, said to me sharply:

"Au revoir, monsieur. And come back with a different expression."

I perceived that my hurt was greater than I had thought, that I was letting it show and bore publicly the signs of my emotion. I was overwhelmed. Even more: when I returned to my room which was not beautiful but which I loved, I was filled with disgust. Whatever was not she, was insipid or odious. But I did not know where to dodge the phantom I had brought back with me.

The next day I found the phantom again.

I went to the Bibliothèque Nationale and asked for the books I needed. I had to write an article on Paolo Ucello. Incapable of reflection and without control over my intelligence, I acquitted myself well of my task and realized that when you have a natural disposition for it, mechanical application is enough for success in any intellectual work and most often it is out of disgraceful laziness that we wait for inspiration. It was the sixth of May; I fixed

upon the fourteenth for my visit to the studio in the rue Basse-du-Rempart. Meanwhile my obsession grew daily more calm and more lovable. I felt that I was wrong to revisit her who had left her shade with me, but I did not go back on my word. On the fourteenth of May I dressed with unusual care and chose my newest cravat. I had two scarf-pins; one a flower in enamel half open between two golden leaves; the other was made of a silver medal of Alexandria with the head of Jupiter Ammon. I chose the medal as being better art. Remembering my silence and my awkwardness when I had been presented to the Princess Bagration, I thought that she would not recognize me and would refuse to see me. But what matter? I had nothing to fear, having nothing to hope. The house was low; a little staircase led, in three flights, to the studio. I entered. She received me as if she had known me always and without letting go of her modelling-tool excused herself for not giving me her hand which was full of clay. She was dressed in a grey smock which hung straight down. This blouse was a precious and astonishing revelation at a time when women did not dress in accordance with their figures and superposed a dressmaker's edifice on their natural foundation. To-day it is impossible to conceive the glory given to a woman like Marie Bagration by this rough envelope which bore her as on sails far from the vulgarity of the world to the happy regions of nymphs and goddesses. Her flesh was no longer touched with gold, as I had seen it, by the light of candles and lamps; but the studio light, coming from the ceiling, fell without a break on her forehead and nose, which were on the same plane, and gave a divine purity to her face. She was finishing the bust of M Viardot who was old and posed half-asleep. Her steps when she withdrew from the bust to criticize and returned to work upon it were quite short and indicated a slight myopia. It seemed to me that her modelling was vigorous and had a certain brutality. The studio was cluttered with casts and old ikons; Persian stuffs were scattered carelessly about. M Viardot whom I had already seen many times, was not alone with her. Three men, one young, the other two old, were sitting on the divans in a heap of cushions. At first I did not know who they were for the mistress of the house never made introductions. They were smoking cigarettes and hardly spoke. I had been there some twenty minutes when Marie Bagration spoke to a tall blond young man.

"Cyrille," she said, "play something for me."

He went to the piano and played with prodigious virtuosity. I had the humiliation not to know what he was playing. I read Chopin, Scherzo, on the music. I was regarding the movements of the woman who was the most beautiful music in the world for me. When he was allowed to stop posing and while Marie Bagration spread a damp cloth over the bust, M Viardot shook himself and little by little came out of his daze. He was a great lover of art and had published some highly esteemed books on Spanish painting. He was also an excellent man. He congratulated me kindly on my collaboration in a great work on painting. Himself the husband of the most perfect singer of her time, he congratulated Cyrille Balachow on his impassioned and ardent playing. It was from him that I learned the name of the young virtuoso. I was in a new world of which I knew nothing. I departed without having exchanged two words with Marie Bagration.

I did not know her and perhaps I did not want to know her. Wiser than I will seem to those who read this story, wiser than I myself thought, I had penetrated to the secret of Eros, which is that true love desires mystery. In truth we love only what we do not know. By what road had I reached this inaccessible truth? I had all that can be had of love: a phantom. I walked with my phantom in the woods of Meudon and Saint-Cloud. And I was happy. I paid a visit to Mme Airiau who received me almost as affectionately as usual, but she did not speak of the Princess Bagration. M Milsent whom I found there, took advantage of a moment when we were not observed and asked me whether I was visiting the studio in the rue Basse-du-Rempart. I answered yes; but rarely.

"She does not know how to receive," he replied, "she is a savage. . . ."

My visits to the rue Basse-du-Rempart continued without variations. Always as I crossed the threshold of the studio I seemed to be transported to another planet. Once I found Marie Bagration alone, standing before her tripod and caressing a little figure of a naked woman with her finger. I wanted to talk to her about her art and, trying to avoid banal praise, I congratulated her on a firmness of accent infrequent in women. She did not appear dissatisfied at what I said, but she let the conversation drop. I thought to keep it up by speaking about Greek art which I admired madly. She did not follow me into these distant regions and the conversation fell

this time not to be revived. Letting the sculptor work in peace, I was silent. After twenty minutes of quiet she showed me a re-sewn book which was lying on the divan and told me to read her the passage where she had turned down the page. It was a volume of a very common edition of Plato, translated into French by some professor. The page was turned down at this place in *The Banquet* which I read in a loud voice:

"Although many had achieved many noble acts, to only some, to be easily counted, did the gods grant this as a gift, for the soul to return from Hades; but that of Alcestis seemed so beautiful to men and gods alike that they sent her back, struck with admiration of the deed. Thus do even the gods especially honour the zeal bestowed on love and valour.

"But Orpheus, the son of Oeagrus, did the gods send back from Hades with his object unaccomplished, by showing him the phantom merely of his wife, for whom he went, and not restoring her real self; because he appeared to act the coward, as being a harper, and not daring, like Alcestis, to die for Love, but continuing to go alive to Hades. Hence on this very account did the gods impose on him a punishment, and caused his death to take place at the hands of women."

She had listened to my reading with the apathy she had in all things. But at the last phrase she interrupted me with this reflection:

"So Plato knew that women are more courageous than men. Then why does he base his theory of love in *The Banquet* on the contrary idea?"

She made me continue my reading. At the end of a quarter of an hour came a Russian woman whose name, I soon discovered, was Nathalie Scherer. They kissed and treated each other as old friends. Nathalie might have been thirty-five; her flat face, her high cheek-bones, gave her something of the hardy beauty of a faun.

For six months I haunted the home of Marie Bagration without making the least progress towards intimacy with her who received me, without even growing accustomed to the beauty whose very splendour hid it from me. But this woman who was so foreign to me when I came near her became familiar as soon as I left her pres-

ence. When I could escape and flee to the woods around Versailles, I took her with me. I can say that, because it is true. And arm in arm we followed the secret paths, drunk with joy and suffering.

One day I read in a newspaper:

"The Princess Marie Bagration died at midnight yesterday at her home, rue Basse-du-Rempart."

The paper said nothing more. I knew her who had gone too little to weep at her loss, but I was destroyed. It was devastating, the earth had opened, engulfing my treasure, destroying what had been all the beauty of the world for me.

I rushed to M Viardot. I found him with Cyrille Balachow, the pianist.

"This death!" I cried.

The voice of Cyrille echoed:

"This death."

"Marie Bagration committed suicide," said Viardot, "and in an unusual manner for a woman. She was found in the morning lying on her bed in a white dress, her string of pearls around her neck, her right temple pierced by a bullet, and the revolver in her hand."

I asked if the cause were known.

"Her mother is mad," said Viardot. "Her father, General Bagration, was a suicide. There is certainly an immediate cause. But I do not know it."

Cyrille's lean hands shook for a long time. Then:

"The public ascribed many and diverse loves to her. A strange thing—those who were always at her house, like me, never knew of a lover. But what can we know? Let us go bid her good-bye."

The sculptor's studio had been transformed into a Star-chamber. She lay upon a bed, a little round spot marked on her temple. The shifting flames of the candles animated her face. Her tragic pallor alone told of death. In her features we found still the apathy she had always shown while she was alive—possibly because she, like the ancients, regarded expression as the enemy of beauty. They had dressed her in a high-necked white dress. Her mother, seated beside her, thin, dishevelled, peered about her like a witch. Friends came in little groups and slowly departed.

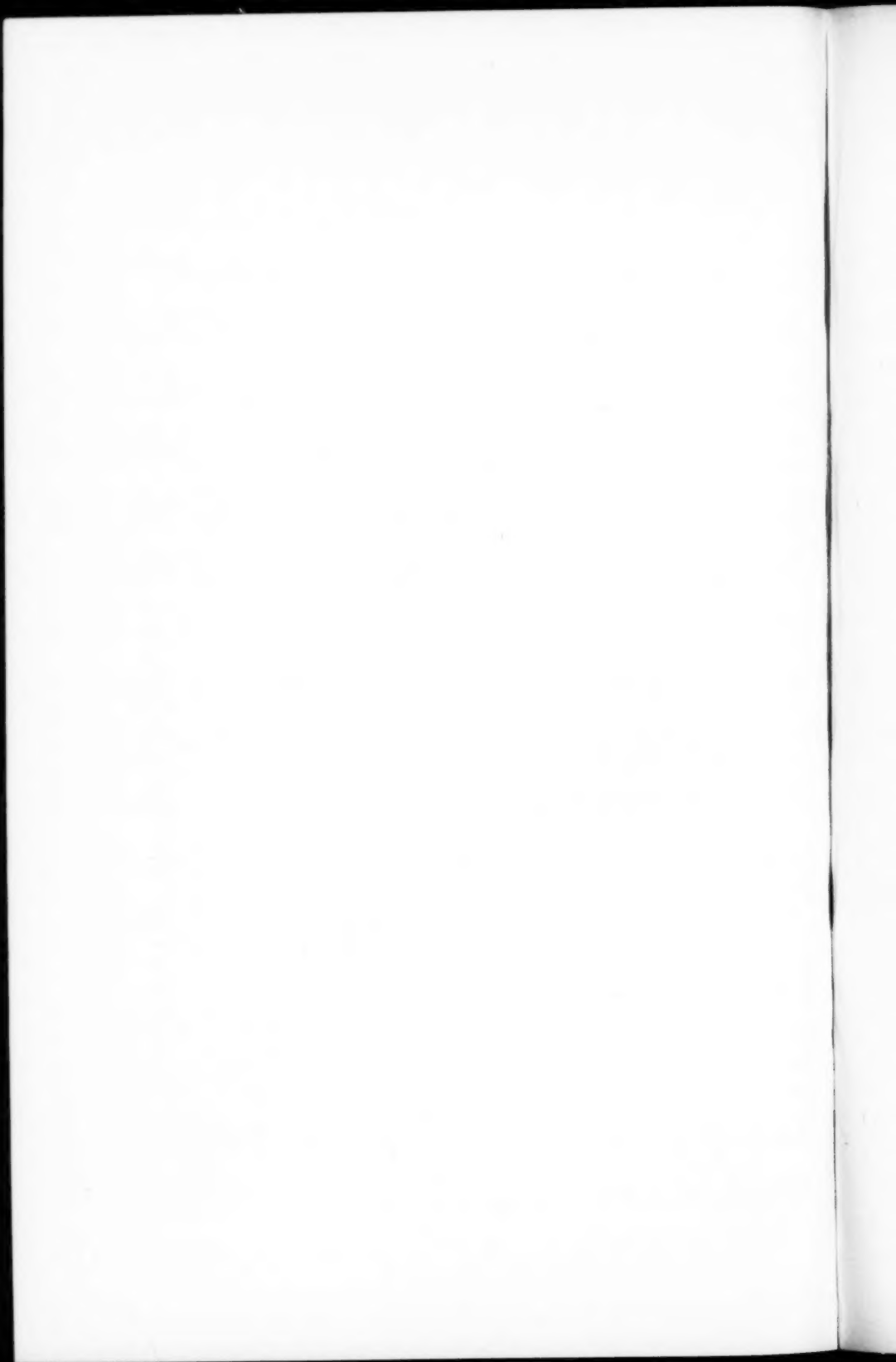
To be concluded



PRIDE. BY DAVID EDSTRÖM



FIAT LUX. BY DAVID EDSTRÖM



STROPHES

BY O. W. DE LUBICZ-MILOSZ

Translated by Ezra Pound

It will be as it is in this life, the same room,
Yes, the same! and at daybreak, the bird of time in the leafage,
Pale as a dead woman's face; and the servants
Moving; and the icy, hollow noise of the fountain-taps,

Terrible, terrible youth; and the heart empty.
Oh! it will be as it is in this life; the poor voices,
The winter voices in the worn-out suburbs;
And the window-mender's cracked street-cry;

The dirty bonnet, with an old woman under it
Howling a catalogue of stale fish, and the blue-apron'd fellow
Spitting on his chapped hands
And bellowing like an angel of judgement,

It will be exactly as here and in this life, and the table,
The bible, Goethe, the ink with the same temporal odour,
Paper, pale; woman, white thought-reader!
Pen, the portrait,

It will be the same,
My child, as in this life, the same garden,
Long, long, tufted, darkish, and, at lunch-time,
Pleasure of being together; that is—
People unacquainted, having only in common
A knowledge of their unacquaintance—
And that one must put on one's best clothes
To go into the night—at the end of things,
Loveless and lampless;
It will be the same as in this life,

The same lane in the forest; and at mid-day, in mid-autumn
When the clean road turns like a weeping woman
To gather the valley flowers,
We will cross in our walks,
 As in the yesterday you have forgotten,
 In the gown whose colour you have forgotten.

SEA AND SARDINIA

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

II

CAGLIARI

STRANGE the feeling round the harbour: as if everybody had gone away. Yet there are people about. It is *festa* however, Epiphany. But it is so different from Sicily: none of the suave Greek-Italian charms, none of the airs and graces, none of the glamour. Rather bare, rather stark, rather cold and yellow—somehow like Malta, without Malta's foreign liveliness. Thank Goodness no one wants to carry my knapsack. Thank Goodness no one has a fit at the sight of it. Thank Heaven no one takes any notice. They stand cold and aloof, and don't move.

On the great parapet above the Municipal Hall and above the corkscrew high-street a thick fringe of people is hanging, looking down. We go to look too: and behold, below there is the entrance to a costume ball. Yes, there is a china shepherdess in pale blue and powdered hair, crook, ribbons, Marie Antoinette satin daintiness and all, slowly and haughtily walking up the road, and gazing superbly round. She is not more than twelve years old, moreover. Two servants accompany her. She gazes supremely from right to left as she goes, mincingly, and I would give her the prize for haughtiness. She is perfect—a little too haughty for Watteau, but "marquise" to a T. The people watch in silence. There is no yelling and screaming and running. They watch in a suitable silence.

Comes a carriage with two fat bay horses slithering, almost swimming up the corkscrew high-street. That in itself is a *tour-de-force*: for Cagliari doesn't have carriages. Imagine a street like a corkscrew stair, paved with slippery stones. And imagine two bay horses rowing their way up it: they did not walk a single stride. But they arrived. And there fluttered out three strangely exquisite children, two frail, white satin Pierrots and a white satin Pierrette. They

were like fragile winter butterflies with black spots. They had a curious, indefinable remote elegance, something conventional and *fin-de-siècle*. But not our century. The wonderful artificial delicacy of the eighteenth. The boys had big, perfect ruffs round their necks: and behind were slung old, cream-coloured Spanish shawls, for warmth. They were frail as tobacco flowers, and with remote, cold elegance they fluttered by the carriage, from which emerged a large black-satin Mama. Fluttering their queer little butterfly feet on the pavement, hovering round the large Mama like three frail-tissued ghosts, they found their way past the solid, seated Carabinieri into the hall.

Followed another white satin marquise with a maid-servant. They are strong on the eighteenth century in Cagliari. Perhaps it is the last bright reality to them. The nineteenth hardly counts.

I see my first peasant in costume. He is an elderly, upright, handsome man, beautiful in the black-and-white costume. He wears the full-sleeved white shirt and the close black bodice of thick, native frieze, cut low. From this sticks out a short kilt or frill, of the same black frieze, a band of which goes between the legs, between the full, loose drawers of coarse linen. The drawers are banded below the knee into tight black frieze gaiters. On his head he has the long black stocking cap, hanging down behind. How handsome he is, and so beautifully male! He walks with his hands loose behind his back, slowly, upright, and aloof. The lovely unapproachableness, indomitable. And the flash of the black and white, the slow stride of the full white drawers, the black gaiters and black cuirass with the bolero, then the great white sleeves and white breast again, and once more the black cap—what marvellous massing of the contrast, marvellous, and superb, as on a magpie! How beautiful maleness is, if it finds its right expression—and how perfectly ridiculous it is made in modern clothes.

There is another peasant too, a young one with a swift eye and hard cheek and hard, dangerous thighs. He has folded his stocking cap, so that it comes forward to his brow like a Phrygian cap. He wears close knee-breeches and close sleeved waistcoat of thick brownish stuff that looks like leather. Over the waistcoat a sort of cuirass of black, rusty sheepskin, the curly wool outside. So he strides, talking to a comrade. How fascinating it is, after the soft Italians, to see these limbs in their close knee-breeches, so definite, so manly, with the old fierceness in them still. One realizes, with horror, that

the race of men is almost extinct in Europe. Only Christlike heroes and woman-worshipping Don Juans, and rabid equality-mongrels. The old, hardy, indomitable male is gone. His fierce singleness is quenched. The last sparks are dying out in Sardinia and Spain. Nothing left but the herd-proletariat and the herd-equality mongrelism, and the wistful poisonous self-sacrificial cultured soul. How detestable!

But that curious, flashing, black-and-white costume! I seem to have known it before: to have worn it even: to have dreamed it. To have dreamed it: to have had actual contact with it. It belongs in some way to something in me—to my past, perhaps. I don't know. But the uneasy sense of blood-familiarity haunts me. I *know* I have known it before. It is something of the same uneasiness I feel before Mount Eryx: but without the awe this time.

They are amusing, these peasant girls and women: so brisk and defiant. They have straight backs, like little walls, and decided, well-drawn brows. And they are amusingly on the alert. There is no eastern creeping. Like sharp, brisk birds they dart along the streets, and you feel they would fetch you a bang over the head as lief as look at you. Tenderness, thank Heaven, does not seem to be a Sardinian quality. Italy is so tender—like cooked macaroni—yards and yards of soft tenderness ravelled round everything. Here men don't idealize women, by the looks of things. Here they don't make those great leering eyes, the inevitable yours-to-command look of Italian males. When the men from the country look at these women, then it is Mind-yourself, my lady. I should think the grovelling Madonna-worship is not much of a Sardinian feature. These women have to look out for themselves, keep their own backbones stiff and their knuckles hard. Man is going to be male Lord if he can. And woman isn't going to give him too much of his own way, either. So there you have it, the fine old martial split between the sexes. It is tonic and splendid, really, after so much sticky intermingling and backboneless Madonna-worship. The Sardinian isn't looking for the "noble woman nobly planned." No, thank you. He wants that young madam over there, a young stiff-necked generation that she is. Far better sport than with the nobly-planned sort: hollow frauds that they are. Better sport too than with a Carmen, who gives herself away too much. In these women there is something shy and defiant and un-get-at-able. The defiant, splendid split

between the sexes, each absolutely determined to defend his side, her side from assault. So the meeting has a certain wild, salty savour, each the deadly unknown to the other. And at the same time, each his own, her own native pride and courage, taking the dangerous leap and scrambling back.

Give me the old, salty way of love. How I am nauseated with sentiment and nobility, the macaroni slithery-slobbery mess of modern adorations.

TO MANDAS

The coach was fairly full of people, returning from market. On these railways the third class coaches are not divided into compartments. They are left open, so that one sees everybody, as down a room. The attractive saddle-bags, *bercole*, were disposed anywhere, and the bulk of the people settled down to a lively *conversazione*. It is much nicest, on the whole, to travel third class on the railway. There is space, there is air, and it is like being in a lively inn, everybody in good spirits.

At our end was plenty of room. Just across the gangway was an elderly couple, like two children, coming home very happily. He was fat, fat all over, with a white moustache and a little not-unamiable frown. She was a tall, lean, brown woman, in a brown full-skirted dress and black apron, with huge pocket. She wore no head covering, and her iron-grey hair was parted smoothly. They were rather pleased and excited being in the train. She took all her money out of her big pocket, and counted it and gave it to him: all the ten lira notes, and the five lira, and the two and the one, peering at the dirty scraps of pink-backed one lira notes to see if they were good. Then she gave him her halfpennies. And he stowed them away in the trouser pocket, standing up to push them down his fat leg. And then one saw, to one's amazement, that the whole of his shirt-tail was left out behind, like a sort of apron worn backwards. Why—a mystery. He was one of those fat, good-natured, unheeding men with a little masterful frown, such as usually have tall, lean, hard-faced, obedient wives. They were very happy.

After a long pull, we come to a station after a stretch of loneliness. Each time, it looks as if there were nothing beyond—no more habitations. And each time we come to a station.

Most of the people have left the train. And as with men driving in a gig, who get down at every public-house, so the passengers usually alight for an airing at each station. Our old fat friend stands up and tucks his shirt-tail comfortably in his trousers, which trousers all the time make one hold one's breath, for they seem at each very moment to be just dropping right down: and he clambers out, followed by the long, brown stalk of a wife.

So the train sits comfortably for five or ten minutes, in the way they have. At last we hear whistles and horns, and our fat friend running and clinging like a fat crab to the very end of the train as it sets off. At the same instant a loud shriek and a bunch of shouts from outside. We all jump up. There, down the line, is the long brown stalk of a wife. She had just walked back to a house some hundred yards off, for a few words, and has now seen the train moving.

Now behold her with hands thrown to heaven, and hear the wild shriek "Madonna!" through all the hubbub. But she picks up her two skirt-knees, and with her thin legs in grey stockings starts with a mad rush after the train. In vain. The train inexorably pursues its course. Prancing, she reaches one end of the platform as we leave the other end. Then she realizes it is not going to stop for her. And then, O horror, her long arms thrown out in wild supplication after the retreating train: then flung aloft to God: then brought down in absolute despair on her head. And this is the last sight we have of her, clutching her poor head in agony and doubling forward. She is left—abandoned.

The poor fat husband has been all the time on the little outside platform at the end of the carriage, holding out his hand to her and shouting frenzied scolding to her and frenzied yells for the train to stop. And the train has not stopped. And she is left—left on that God-forsaken station in the waning light.

So, his face all bright, his eyes round and bright as two stars, absolutely transfigured by dismay, chagrin, anger, and distress, he comes and sits in his seat, ablaze, stiff, speechless. His face is almost beautiful in its blaze of conflicting emotions. For some time he is as if unconscious in the midst of his feelings. Then anger and resentment crop out of his consternation. He turns with a flash to the long-nosed, insidious, Phoenician-looking guard. —Why couldn't they stop the train for her! And immediately, as if someone had set

fire to him, off flares the guard. Heh!—the train can't stop for every person's convenience! The train is a train—the time-table is a time-table. What did the old woman want to take her trips down the line for? Heh! She pays the penalty for her own inconsiderateness. Had *she* paid for the train—heh? And the fat man all the time firing off his unheeding and unheeded answers. One minute—only one minute—if he, the conductor had told the driver! If he, the conductor, had shouted! A poor woman! Not another train! What was she going to do! Her ticket? And no money. A poor woman—

There was a train back to Cagliari that night, said the conductor, at which the fat man nearly burst out of his clothing like a bursting seed-pod. He bounced on his seat. What good was that? What good was a train back to Cagliari, when their home was in Snelli! Making matters worse—

So they bounced and jerked and argued at one another, to their hearts' content. Then the conductor retired, smiling subtly, in a way they have. Our fat friend looked at us with hot, angry, ashamed, grieved eyes and said it was a shame. Yes, we chimed, it *was* a shame.

SORGONO: THE INN

In the bar a wretched candle was weeping light—uneasy, gloomy men were drinking their Saturday-evening-home-coming dram. Cattle lay down in the road, in the cold air, as if hopeless.

Had the milk come?

No.

When would it come?

He didn't know.

Well, what were we to do? Was there no room? Was there nowhere where we could sit?

Yes, there was the "stanza" now.

Now! Taking the only weed of a candle, and leaving the drinkers in the dark, he led us down a dark and stumbly earthen passage, over loose stones and an odd plank, as it would seem underground, to the stanza: the room.

The stanza! It was pitch dark. But suddenly I saw a big fire of

oak-root, a brilliant, flamy, rich fire, and my rage in that second disappeared.

The host, and the candle, forsook us at the door. The stanza would have been in complete darkness, save for that rushing bouquet of new flames in the chimney, like fresh flowers. By this fire-light we saw the room. It was like a dungeon, absolutely empty, with an uneven, earthen floor, quite dry, and high bare walls, gloomy, with a handbreadth of window high up. There was no furniture at all, save a little wooden bench, a foot high, before the fire, and several home-made-looking rush mats rolled up and leaning against the walls. Furthermore a chair before the fire on which hung wet table-napkins. Apart from this, it was a high, dark, naked prison-dungeon.

But it was quite dry, it had an open chimney, and a gorgeous new fire rushing like a waterfall upwards among the craggy stubs of a pile of dry oak roots. I hastily put the chair and the wet corpse-cloths to one side. We sat on the low bench side by side in the dark, in front of this rippling rich fire, in front of the cavern of the open chimney, and we did not care any more about the dungeon and the darkness. Man can live without food, but he can't live without fire. It is an Italian proverb. We had found the fire, like new gold. And we sat in front of it, a little way back, side by side on the low form, our feet on the uneven earthen floor, and felt the flame-light rippling upwards over our faces, as if we were bathing in some gorgeous stream of fieriness. I forgave the dirty-breasted host everything and was as glad as if I had come into a kingdom.

So we sat alone for half an hour, smiling into the flames, bathing our faces in the glow. From time to time I was aware of steps in the tunnel-like passage outside, and of presences peering. But no one came. I was aware too of the faint steaming of the beastly table-napkins, the only other occupants of the room.

In dithers a candle, and an elderly, bearded man in gold-coloured corduroys, and an amazing object on a long, long spear. He put the candle on the mantel-ledge, and crouched at the side of the fire, arranging the oak-roots. He peered strangely and fixedly in the fire. And he held up the speared object before our faces.

It was a kid that he had come to roast. But it was a kid opened

out, made quite flat, and speared like a flat fan on a long iron stalk. It was a really curious sight. And it must have taken some doing. The whole of the skinned kid was there, the head curled in against a shoulder, the stubby cut ears, the eyes, the teeth, the few hairs of the nostrils: and the feet curled curiously round, like an animal that puts its forepaw over its ducked head: and the hindlegs twisted indescribably up: and all skewered flat-wise upon the long iron rod, so that it was a complete flat pattern. It reminded me intensely of those distorted, slim-limbed, dog-like animals which figure on the old Lombard ornaments, distorted and curiously infolded upon themselves. Celtic illuminations also have these distorted, involuted creatures.

The old man flourished the flat kid like a bannerette, whilst he arranged the fire. Then, in one side of the fire-place wall he poked the point of the rod. He himself crouched on the hearth-end, in the half-shadow at the other side of the fire-place, holding the further end of the long iron rod. The kid was thus extended before the fire, like a hand-screen. And he could spin it round at will.

But the hole in the masonry of the chimney-piece was not satisfactory. The point of the rod kept slipping, and the kid came down against the fire. He muttered and muttered to himself, and tried again. Then at length he reared up the kid-banner whilst he got large stones from a dark corner. He arranged these stones so that the iron point rested on them. He himself sat away on the opposite side of the fire-place, on the shadowy hearth-end, and with queer, spell-bound black eyes and completely immovable face, he watched the flames and the kid, and held the handle end of the rod.

We asked him if the kid was for the evening meal—and he said it was. It would be good! And he said yes, and looked with chagrin at the bit of ash on the meat, where it had slipped. It is a point of honour that it should never touch the ash. Did they do all their meat this way? He said they did. And wasn't it difficult to put the kid thus on the iron rod? He said it was not easy, and he eyed the joint closely, and felt one of the forelegs, and muttered that it was not fixed properly.

He spoke with a very soft mutter, hard to catch, and sideways, never to us direct. But his manner was gentle, soft, muttering, reticent, sensitive. He asked us where we came from, and where we were going: always in his soft mutter. And what nation were we, were we French? Then he went on to say there was a war—but he

thought it was finished. There was a war because the Austrians wanted to come into Italy again. But the French and the English came to help Italy. A lot of Sardinians had gone to it. But let us hope it was all finished. He thought it was—young men of Sorgono had been killed. He hoped it was finished.

Then he reached for the candle and peered at the kid. It was evident he was the born roaster. He held the candle and looked for a long time at the sizzling side of the meat, as if he would read portents. Then he held his spit to the fire again. And it was as if time immemorial were roasting itself another meal. I sat holding the candle.

TO NUORO

The bus starts at half past nine. The campanile is clanging nine. Two or three girls go down the road in their Sunday costume of purplish brown. We go up the road, into the clear, ringing frosty air, to find the lane.

And again, from above, how beautiful it is in the sharp morning! The whole village lies in bluish shadow, the hills with their thin pale oak-trees are in bluish shadow still, only in the distance the frost-glowing sun makes a wonderful, jewel-like radiance on the pleasant hills, wild and thinly-wooded, of this interior region. Real fresh wonder-beauty all around. And such humanity.

Returning to the village we find a little shop and get biscuits and cigarettes. And we find our friends the bus-men. They are shy this morning. They are ready for us when we are ready.

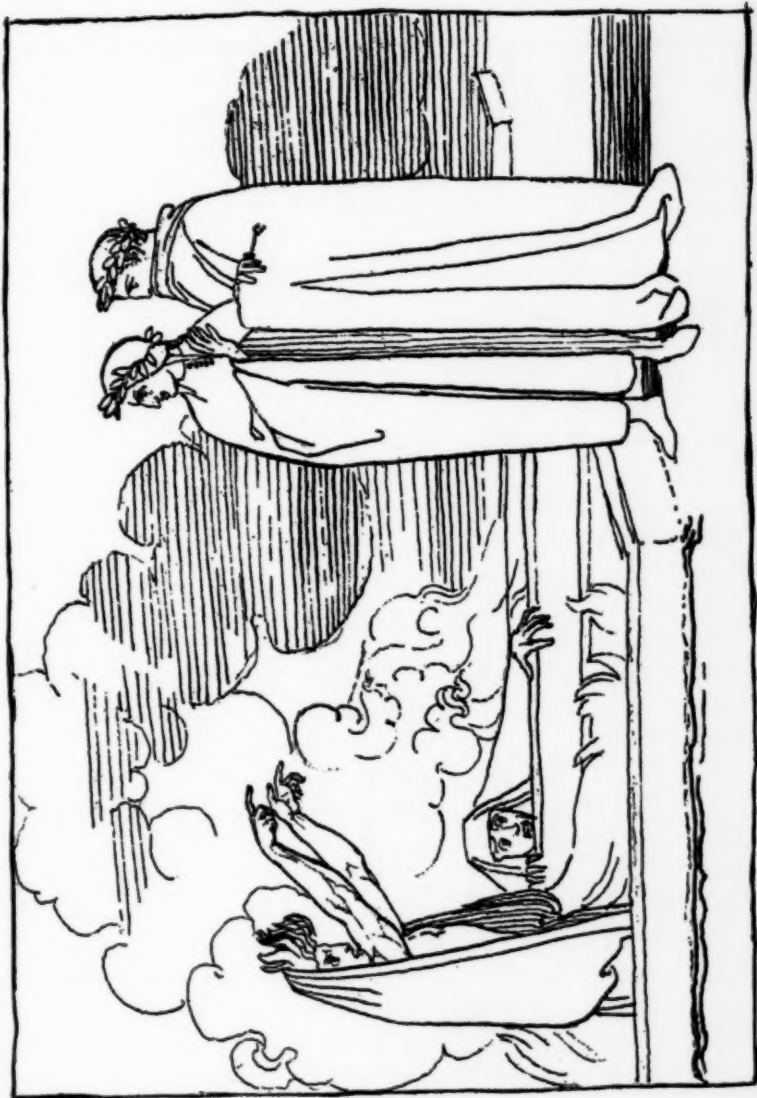
The automobile took us rushing and winding up the hill, sometimes through cold, solid-seeming shadow, sometimes across a patch of sun. There was thin, bright ice in the ruts, and deep grey hoar-frost on the grass. I cannot tell how the sight of the grass and bushes heavy with frost and wild in their own primitive wildness charmed me. The slopes of the steep wild hills came down shaggy and bushy, with a few berries lingering, and the long grass-stalks sere with the frost. Again the dark valley sank below like a ravine, but shaggy, bosky, unbroken. It came upon me how I loved the sight of the blue-shadowed, tawny-tangled winter with its frosty standstill. The young oaks keep their brown leaves. And doing so, surely they are best with a thin edge of rime.

One begins to realize how old the real Italy is, how man-gripped, and how withered. England is far more wild and savage and lonely, in her country parts. Here since endless centuries man has tamed the impossible mountain side into terraces, he has quarried the rock, he has fed his sheep among the thin woods, he has cut his boughs and burnt his charcoal, he has been half domesticated even among the wildest fastnesses. This is what is so attractive about the remote places, the Abruzzi, for example. Life is so primitive, so pagan, so strangely heathen and half savage. And yet it is human life. And the wildest country is half humanized, half brought under. It is all conscious. Wherever one is in Italy, either one is conscious of the present, or of the mediaeval influences, or of the far, mysterious gods of the early Mediterranean. Wherever one is, the place has its conscious genius. Man has lived there and brought forth his consciousness there and in some way brought that place to consciousness, given it its expression, and, really, finished it. The expression may be Proserpine, or Pan, or even the strange "shrouded gods" of the Etruscans or the Sikels, none the less it is an expression. The land has been humanized, through and through: and we in our own tissue-consciousness bear the results of this humanization. So that for us to go to Italy and to *penetrate* into Italy is like a most fascinating act of self-discovery—back, back down the old ways of time. Strange and wonderful chords awake in us, and vibrate again after many hundreds of years of complete forgetfulness.

And then—and then—there is a final feeling of sterility. It is all worked out. It is all known: *connu, connu!*

This Sunday morning, seeing the frost among the tangled, still savage bushes of Sardinia, my soul thrilled again. This was not all known. This was not all worked out. Life was not only a process of rediscovering backwards. It is that, also: and it is that intensely. Italy has given me back I know not what of myself, but a very, very great deal. She has found for me so much that was lost: like a restored Osiris. But this morning in the omnibus I realize that, apart from the great re-discovery backwards, which one *must* make before one can be whole at all, there is a move forwards. There are unknown, unworked lands where the salt has not lost its savour. But one must have perfected oneself in the great past first.

The End

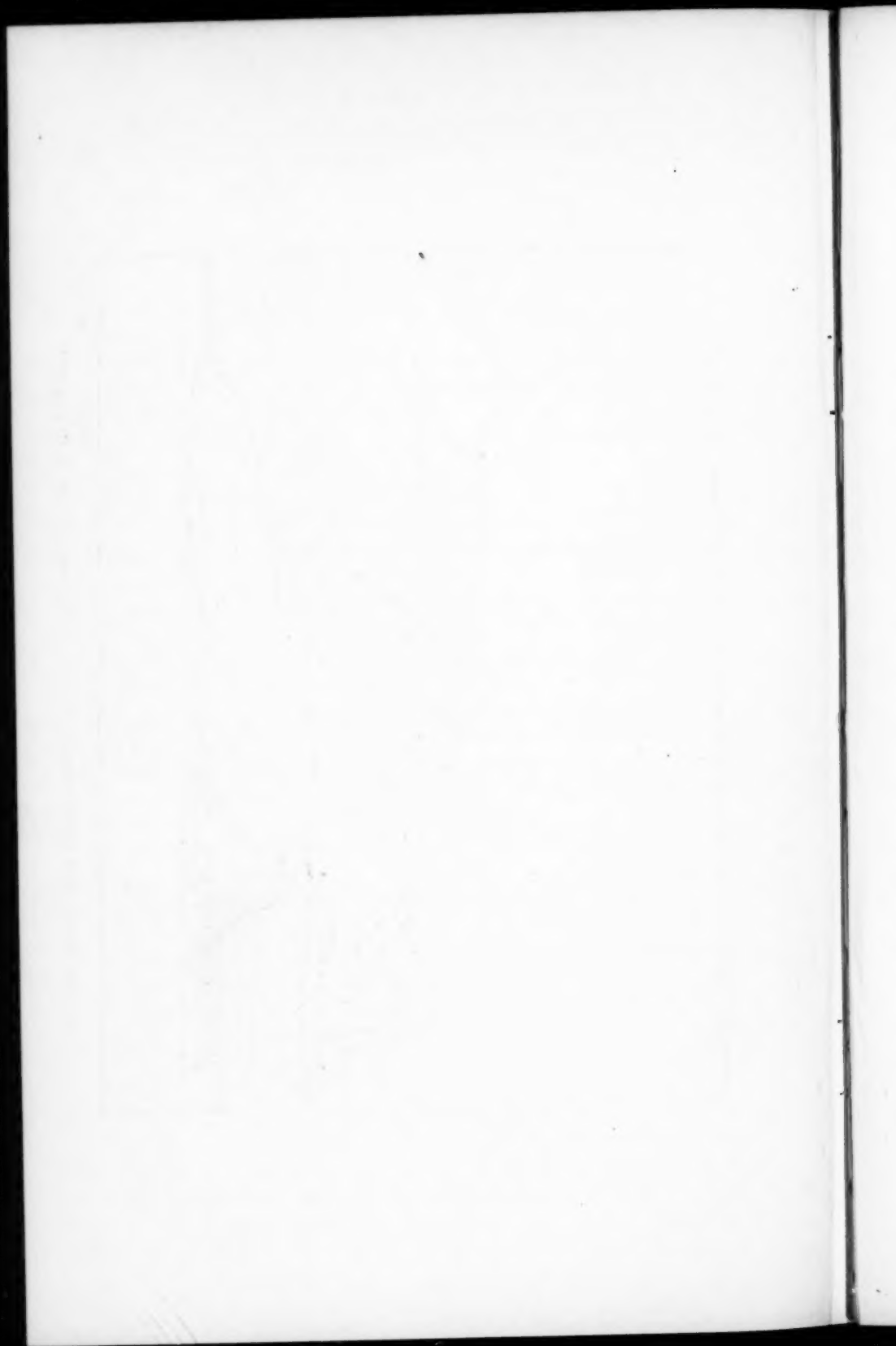


... VOLGITI, CHE FAI? VEDI LÀ FARINATA . . . INFERNO: 10. BY JOHN FLAXMAN
Courtesy of Scott and Fowles





Courtesy of Scott and Fowles
CIASCUN DI NOI D'UN GRADO FECE LETTO . . . PURGATORIO: 27. BY JOHN FLAXMAN



DUBLIN LETTER

October, 1921.

THE possible consequences to Irish literature of the revolutionary changes impending in this country, suggest the subject of this letter. These changes may perhaps best be summarized as the passing of Kathleen ni Hoolihan. The Irish citizen will no longer be an idealist by right of birth, and Irish literature will cease to enjoy a sort of literary compensation for its acknowledged political misfortunes. To some extent, Sinn Fein has prepared Ireland for this transformation; for the doctrine of Sinn Fein has always been that the Ireland of the past couple of centuries, out of which the figure of Kathleen ni Hoolihan emerged, was not so much a nation under the eclipse as a nation afflicted by a profound demoralization. Ireland had but to remember herself to become once again the final seat of the conquerors of Western Europe and its first civilizers, the proud race which had allowed herself to be victimized by a mongrel breed of foreigners, but would still be what it had been. Nay, all through the period of English domination, Sinn Fein has taught that Irish civilization has remained in being, maintaining in its language the potentiality of a lofty and self-sufficient culture. Even in its degradation and suppression, Ireland has affected the course of human history: McArthur Griffith, for example, in *The Resurrection of Hungary* (Third edition, 1918) shows how the Great War followed logically from the Act of Union; and in the same work he demonstrates that Irish ideas have been the main agents in building up both modern Germany and the United States of America. And now this negative influence which Ireland has exercised is to be converted into a positive one, to be expressed presumably in modern Gaelic literature. The part assigned to this literature might seem beyond its energies; but under the influence of Sinn Fein ideas, Ireland has acquired a happy capacity for regarding possibilities and potentialities as the true facts. A professor of the National University has recently recorded his opinion that "the age of Pearse will, in after time, have a glory like the age of Pericles" (Arthur Clery: *Dublin Essays*. Maunsell).

I quote these utterances, not at all to invite ridicule, but to illustrate the mood of exaltation engendered in Ireland by the political movement, and to indicate that the traditional rôle of literature in Ireland is already changed completely. Anglo-Irish literature, from the time of Moore, has adapted itself to the notion of Ireland as a disinherited political entity; modern Irish literature, in fact, has arisen out of the sense of Ireland's privation of political independence, almost as the idealism of the Jews originated in exile and oppression. Would we have heard of the New Jerusalem but for the Babylonian captivity? And would we have heard that other-worldly strain in Irish literature, which we call the Celtic spirit, but for the barbarities of Mountjoy and Cromwell, the Penal Laws, and the suppression of Irish manufactures? One might go on to ask, would the Irish, any more than the Jews, have realized themselves as they have done, had there been no Dispersal? In spite of all the misfortunes of their country, the Irish have, one way or another, played a considerable part in the world; and all their achievements, in which not only Sinn Feiners glory, might be adduced in proof of the assertion that in blending with other races they have hitherto found their true vocation.

In this connexion, it is permissible to doubt whether political independence is particularly favourable to, or indeed has anything to do with, the exercise of that form of human power which we call literature. While debarred from political responsibility, the power of a nation may go into literature, and this perhaps has happened in Ireland during the last century. What is far more important than political independence, from the point of view of national literature, is the existence of tradition; and the literary tradition of the Anglo-Irish has not been definite enough to hold or greatly influence those more stirring spirits who have found Ireland too small for them and have added to the achievements of English literature. Yet within Ireland itself, Anglo-Irish literature has affirmed the principle of nationality. It has almost reached the point of claiming for Ireland a kingdom not of this world; an affiliation to antiquity which has saved it from modern vulgarity; an unearthly vision which has come to it from privation, and preserved it from the follies of infidelity. And now this tradition is already overthrown, or is about to be reconstituted, and the world of literature, perhaps, need not expect to hear from Ireland for some time: until, in fact, some new tradition has come into being.

What will this tradition be? The bright young men who interpret Sinn Fein to us have no hesitation in their answer; it will be a resumption of the Gaelic tradition. This very day I read in a newspaper, in an article on Mediaeval Ireland: "Our national life is resuming to-day the course which it was taking six hundred years ago. . . . In the Gaeltacht even the advance guard of Renaissance ideals has never found a footing." The Sinn Fein President has even declared that "Ireland with its language and without freedom is preferable to Ireland with freedom and without its language." In face of such energies of belief as Sinn Fein carries with it, any attempt to estimate the degree of vitality in the Irish language would be invidious. We hear continual reports of its wonderful activities, but feel at times with regard to these somewhat as one feels in reading the daily bulletins as to the health of some infirm sovereign, whose life is so important to the existing régime that the truth is perhaps not allowed to reach the public. The continued life of the Irish language is, in fact, not only essential to the claim of Sinn Fein to a distinct Irish civilization, but is not without importance to Anglo-Irish literature.

I have myself been seduced by the almost Hellenic aspect of a page of printed Irish, to attempt an entrance into that ancient Irish world through the gateway of its language. When learning a modern European language, you find yourself at once within an ordered system of things, with roads leading to the citadel, the Olympic abode of poets and philosophers, whither you press forwards gradually dropping your text-books; but as you advance in the knowledge of Irish, you seem to penetrate further and further into a pathless expanse, without a citadel in sight: you meet no passengers to and from a capital, only wayfarers with a vague errand like your own, who stop for a moment to practise their "Irish" upon you, and leave you in the waste again. This is no doubt the charm of the Irish language, that you can get away in it from the pavement and the newspaper; but I have long been of opinion that Nature in Ireland is a full equivalent for its ancient language, and offers you all that the language can offer, and much which it cannot. They say that the secret of the soil is unknown to the mere English-speaker: the truth is that there is more than one Ireland, just as archaeologists are acquainted with several cities of Rome, and I know not how many Troy towns. The Ireland at present on the surface and with which I am acquainted, is an English-speaking country. I need

only mention the fact that the extreme claim for the Irish language—for instance, that put forward by Mr Griffith in his *Resurrection of Hungary*—is expressed in the most excellent and nervous English.

It is therefore to be anticipated that if Ireland is ever again to be, in Dr Johnson's phrase, the "quiet habitation of literature and sanctity," it will use the English language as the natural medium of its thought and devotion. The English language, after all, will have lost a good deal of its invidiousness when it is no longer the language of the conquering but of the subject-race; and it will be enough for the Anglo-Irish tradition that the English occupation has established the English language as the vehicle of thought in Ireland. As to which of the traditions—Gaelic or Anglo-Irish—is the more productive, there can be little doubt. The creative spirit has manifested itself within the Anglo-Irish tradition. Even where the Gaelic tradition appears to succeed, it is only doing what the Anglo-Irish have done, not always satisfactorily to Catholic Ireland, but with a regard for the truth of things which has on the whole satisfied the world. Our laws may hereafter be promulgated in Gaelic; but it will be for the Anglo-Irish to say, with Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, "If a man be permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

JOHN EGLINTON

BOOK REVIEWS

ARRIVISTE AND ARISTOCRAT

ERIK DORN. *By Ben Hecht. 12mo. 409 pages. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.*

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. *By Stephen Vincent Benét. 12mo. 359 pages. Henry Holt and Company. \$1.90.*

MR BEN HECHT'S friends have been tugging prematurely at the mantle of James Joyce. Ulysses in the definitive edition which will permit us to judge its qualities is not yet off the press, but with Mr Wyndham Lewis Mr Joyce has been mentioned as the writer to whom Mr Hecht is nearest. I confess to taking little pleasure in the thought and if Mr Hecht cannot bear being lonely and unclothed in Amercia I would suggest that his friends import the purple waistcoat of M Theophile Gautier for his not perceptibly shrinking form.

Few books have been so wilfully written *pour épater* as Erik Dorn. It is very good of Mr Hecht to abandon the stupid game of trying to shock the unintelligent and to snipe the intelligentsia instead. He has any number of shots in his locker and a really impressive array of pistols. There is form and within the form there is chaos; there is poetry and cynicism about the poetry and sentimentality about the cynicism; economy of means and prodigality of words; there is the old trick of mocking at the illusion one has created and the comparatively new trick of taking pride in not creating the illusion at all; the book is a bombardment in which the very duds are intentional. The fact that the attack never comes off is perhaps the neatest trick in the lot.

Manipulations without magic, dazzle-paint, *arrivisme*, are so irritating in this book that I could forgive any one for not seeing the many good things in it. It is not frightfully important to put down Mr Hecht's sources; he has staged a paper-chase and each flutter-

ing scrap has a name on it, from Rochefoucauld to Maxwell Bodenheim. But complete originality except in a man of universal genius would imply that the author had rejected civilization altogether and was too far off centre for us to understand him at all. Mr Hecht has chosen paradox where others choose platitudes, cynicism for sentiment, irony for sympathy. It is true that his tongue is always in someone else's cheek; but that is better than Mr Benét who is continually being caught with his in someone else's saucer.

Erik Dorn gives the effect of being a non-autobiographical novel and is certainly not a photographic study of American life. Coming swift on the heels of some commercially successful examples of these types it gives the impression of being powerful in imagination and artistic in composition. I do not think it is either, but I do think that it is courageous. Mr Hecht has neither created nor described a type; he has renounced the pleasure of being told that his characters are true to life, are recognizably real. Whenever I hear readers say that they know people just like the characters in a book I feel certain of one of two things: either the book is bad or the critics are liars. There never were people exactly like Emma Bovary or Becky Sharp or Sam Weller or Milly Theale or Hamlet or Stephen Dedalus or Ursula Brangwyn. Mr Hecht has failed but at least he has failed in the legitimate and honourable pursuit of an artist—to make us accept the specific credibility of his particular characters and his particular circumstances and events. There are far too many novels in which one can verify the existence of one's neighbours, a totally superfluous activity, and far too few in which one can recognize the characters themselves.

I think that the reasons for Mr Hecht's failure ought to be fairly evident from the things said in his praise. It is notable that his book is being constantly compared with something mechanical: "a gaudy and fantastic panorama," "a Kaleidoscope," "verbal patterns, the pungently evocative word combinations," "a distinct new model in mechanics of expression," "Pain's Destruction of Pompeii" (this from the publisher, to be sure) or with something essentially a stunt, like acrobatics and juggling. The idea that we must make our creations conform to the spirit of our inventions, as if trees had stopped growing and rivers no longer ran, has been pretty well knocked in the head by that passage from *La Noce Massacrée* which Mr Ezra Pound recently quoted: "Gabriele d'Annunzio looking at

a locomotive thinks of the Victory of Samothrace, Marinetti looking at the Victory of Samothrace thinks of a locomotive. There is not much to choose between them." Mr Hecht looking at life thinks of a cinematograph. He is successful only in his action and even here the movie technique is obvious for he is alternately retarding and speeding up his film. You get at moments the beautiful rhythm of the athlete poised breathless in the air or the fantastic nightmare fury of a motor journey through New York City in four minutes. It may surprise Mr Hecht to realize that these are the metronomic rhythms which himself and his hero de'est; the rhythm of life, as simple and as unpredictable as the pulse-beat, has escaped Mr Hecht entirely.

For the most part it has been lost in a torrent of words. Just as Mr Benét writes about a poet and quotes his poetry so Mr Hecht presenting the figure of one who is dazzled by his own verbal excesses quotes these excesses with an uncritical Boswellian fidelity. The words that Erik said, is saying, was about to say but didn't, are all quoted; and oddly when Erik is through Mr Hecht begins on his own and in a voice that is strangely like Erik's recites long epigrammatic and imagist prose pieces about the city, about newspapers, about the war. This is tactics but it indicates that in the presentation of character Mr Hecht hasn't mastered the simplest problems of foreshortening. I can understand his not wanting to read Henry James but surely he can read May Sinclair and study the presentation of five minor characters in Mr Waddington of Wyck as a primer of perspective.

Erik Dorn is one of the noisiest books ever written; The Beginning of Wisdom, in spite of the fact that the hero goes to one of the more vocal of our colleges, takes part in the Bisbee deportations, does time in the movies, and joins the army, is one of the most languid. Mr Hecht's lusty and vulgar pleasure in the ideas he has just discovered leads him to try them on everybody; you have no sooner set foot in his house with all the latest improvements and none of the comforts when he declares you are flabby and drags you off to the electric showers; he is possessed by his marvelous inventions and discoveries. He goes at life feet first. Mr Benét's book is the work of a gentleman; like those European aristocrats who employ a *sale juif* to conduct the more detestably imperative of their financial affairs, Mr Benét knows that there is something futile and vulgar

about experience and ideas both; he writes as one whose ancestors for generations have always inherited ideas and did not have to work for them; his thoughts are fresh and new, but they are not his by conquest and he properly refuses to handle them. In his own person he calls *The Rainbow* of Mr D. H. Lawrence "that astonishing sexual raree-show," and his hero "passed out cold at 10 P. M. in a minor dive quoting 'The Shropshire Lad.'" There is a page in which Mr Benét describes his hero putting out tentacles in a dozen different directions and he names names: John Leitsch, Danton, "a cross between Abraham and Andrew Carnegie" . . . "a Wellsian intellectual aristocracy," Whitman, Nathan Hale, Cambronne. Such a nostalgia for the experiences of other people is remarkable. Philip marries while at college, rolls the bones, leaves his coat in the hands of the harlot, thinks and suffers and loves, but he never breaks through the bell-jar under which his author has imprisoned him. Mr Benét writes smoothly, monotonously as Mr George Moore in his present manner but without Mr Moore's beauty, and has a gift of metaphor. But of creative power this book does not show the faintest indication. The evasion, boggling, and final disintegration of the scene in which Millie gives herself to Philip is worse than weakness:

"They are sleeping with the abstracted smiles of the happy dead and the saturated peace of babies after a bottle. . . ."

The chapter is called "Frankie and Johnny Were Lovers."

GILBERT SELDES

IRISH FAIRY TALES

IRISH FAIRY TALES. *By James Stephens. Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. 8vo. 318 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$4.*

READER, have you ever perused Standish Hayes O'Grady's *Silva Gadelica*? Or have you ever read the stories that are given as illustrations of the Celtic doctrine of the Other World in Kuno Meyer's and Alfred Nutt's *Voyage of Bran*? If you have not done such reading you are not in a position to appreciate the achievement that is in James Stephens' *Irish Fairy Tales*.

But one has to begin by insisting that the title is the least adequate thing about the book. It suggests the nursery and the book is for the nursery and for every other place as well. There are people of Faerie in the book—there are as many of them as there are men and women of this world—but these are not the accepted fairies, the fairies of the tradition that has been fixed by the Grimms and by Hans Christian Andersen. These are the people of the *Shi*, the Irish Fairies who are gods divested of all creative and overruling functions. They belong to a self-determining world that interpenetrates with our self-determining world. As the old poem says of them:

“Good are they at man-slaying feats,
Melodious over meats and ale;
Of woven verse they have the spell,
At chess-play they excel the Gael.”

No, these are not Fairy Tales in the accepted meaning of the term; they are re-creations—re-creations of the court romances of mediaeval Ireland.

It is only when we think of them as such that we appreciate James Stephens' imaginative and technical achievement. I want to refer again to the stories given in *Silva Gadelica* and to the marginal stories of the *Voyage of Bran*. Could such stories ever be made readable for any except those who had a craze for Celtic lit-

erature, one might wonder as one read them. Other stories are complicated. Other stories are inconsequential. But these stories have a complicated inconsequence and an inconsequential complicatedness.

There is another thing about this literature in the original that makes it difficult for us. We do not get its tone. Mediaeval Irish literature has humour, but how much of it is humorous? Then there is its curious elaboration. We know from Standish Hayes O'Grady's translations that these stories have an extravagant pedantry of style. He makes us see a warrior "carrying on his dorsal dimension a huge irrefragible shield." But is this pedantry the exuberance of language or is it the decay of language? The tradition that would enable us to judge would seem to have been lost, and moving through this literature we feel ourselves like the two-dimensional creatures of *Tertium Organum* moving in a three-dimensional world.

Then James Stephens comes along and he starts to re-tell these very stories. He does not make them two-dimensional as a less imaginative and courageous story-teller would be sure to make them; he leaves them three-dimensional. But somehow or another he makes his readers three-dimensional too, and he lets us move through this world without the consciousness that we are on a plane that is outrageously alien.

He does this by creating a norm. He creates a norm of friendliness. Everyone in the stories is friendly. "But," says he at the end of *The Enchanted Cave of Cesh Corran*:

"But that did not prevent Goll from killing Fionn's brother Cairell later on, nor did it prevent Fionn from killing Goll later on again, and the last did not prevent Goll from rescuing Fionn out of hell when the Fianna-Finn were sent there under the new God. Nor is there any reason to complain or to be astonished at these things, for it is a mutual world we live in, a give-and-take world, and there is no great harm in it."

The stories are made human by this friendliness and affection; a norm is thus established, and we are then at liberty to stray into and out of many worlds of enchantment. But without this norm of human friendliness the tales would be only remarkable instances of how not to tell a story. Only James Stephens could have estab-

lished this norm; by establishing it he has been able to bring us into the world of Irish mediaeval romance—a world of enchantment, compared to which the enchantment in Marie de France's *Lays* and in the *Mabinogion* of the Welsh story-tellers is only a far-flung echo.

We are made believe that James Stephens' fulness of humorous, fantastic, and lovely descriptiveness is the equivalent of the bardic exuberance of language that Standish Hayes O'Grady indicates. It would certainly take one of the Gaelic shanachies to better the description of the dog which Mananan produced from under his cloak.

But it is not only in descriptions of what is grotesque that James Stephens has this abundance and this mastery. His descriptions of things that have loveliness and grace are masterful too. The book has all the glamour of Celtic romance, but it has also the humour and the conscious extravagance that are in that romance. Anglo-Irish renderings of Celtic stories have created a legend of tragedy and distress. "They went forth to battle but they always fell" has been made the key-note of that romance. But the mediaeval Irish rejoiced in boisterous humour. Here, for instance, out of the *Speckled Book* that was written six hundred years ago is a description that might well describe the re-creator of that age to-day—the writer of *Irish Fairy Tales*:

"A youngster of deep lore, entertaining and delightful. And he must be well-served; for he is melancholy, passionate, impetuous, violent, and impatient; and he is eager, fond of eating early; and he is voracious, niggardly, greedy; and yet he is mild and gentle . . . and easily moved to laughter. And he is a man great in thanksgiving and in upbraidings. And no wonder; for he has wit both to censure and to praise the hearth of a well-appointed, gentle, fine, mirthful house with a mead-hall."

PADRAIC COLUM

THE MAN IN THE GUTTER

THE MAN IN THE STREET. *By Meredith Nicholson.*

8vo. 271 pages. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.

WHAT really does Mr Meredith Nicholson mean by the simple faith which he here professes? These are papers on American topics written by one who can speak for the man in the street. Yesterday Mr Nicholson hummed some bars of music over the telephone and a friend told him from which of Beethoven's symphonies the theme was taken. Had he hummed them into a phonograph, the Victor and Columbia research offices would have been glad to oblige. Mr Nicholson, attesting to these and similar evidences of civilization, ends his essay, *Let Main Street Alone*, with the remark that "after all, it's only the remnant of Israel that can be saved," and I do not know whether that doctrine is more repugnant to Christianity or to Democracy. Perhaps the explanation lies in this:

"I am not sure but that a town is better advertised by enlightened sanitary ordinances duly enforced than by the number of its citizens who are acquainted with the writings of Walter Pater. A little while ago I should have looked upon such a thought as blasphemy."

I am not sure but that he is indulging in loose thinking.

Mr Nicholson against Mr Sinclair Lewis is parochial and therefore emotionally sound. Mr Nicholson saying in defence of Main Street that "if there's any manifestation on earth of a divine ordering of things, it is here in America," is an entertaining jingo or a blasphemer against the universality of God's love, a mocker of the proverb about the rain falling without prejudice on the Americans and the Prussians alike. Mr Nicholson speculating on the discovery "in some far day" of a banjo in the ruins of an American college, says we "do not know but that" the instrument may be accounted nobler than the lyre and the lute.

Mr Nicholson is the same man when he writes of American fiction, of religion, politics, bungalows, love, municipal graft, and James Whitcomb Riley. He always says some perfectly agreeable

and true things, and always stops short of saying anything important. The reason, I think, is that he is not a good American. He deplores the visits paid by Hawthorne and Howells to Europe; the expatriation of Henry James and Edith Wharton is a tragedy—for them, to be sure; if Mr Howells had not seen Venice in the '60's, if Mr James "had been stationed at Chicago, close to the deep currents of national feeling, what a monumental library of vital fiction they might have given us!" I do not want to quarrel with this idea of local contacts, only to say that the deracination of Mr James was complete before he left America, only to point out that those who were stationed have given us pitifully little in the way of great fiction (I evade vitality) and that if we let Main Street alone we are likely to drive out and compel to be alien many another James. The fear of Europe is the beginning of our ignorance. For if Mr Nicholson had understood Europe he might have understood America. The static Europe, the moribund Europe is the background for that America which is always becoming, which is always a flux and a change, and which has escaped Mr Nicholson entirely. His America is, if not a British province, a New England settlement. The America which thinks and suffers and creates, which will some day care less for sanitary ordinances duly enforced and more for civilization, which may be rent by industrial wars and crystallize on a new axis out of its chaos, the America which is always a pioneer and always a home for the dispossessed, is not his.

For those who accept America as Mr Nicholson describes it, this book will be no great illumination; for those who know another America, it will be a deep irritation. But it seems to me that both will feel something less than complete pleasure at this:

"At a small dinner in honor of Henry James he [James Whitcomb Riley] maintained a strict silence until one of the other guests, in an effort to 'draw out' the novelist, spoke of Thomas Hardy and the felicity of his titles, mentioning *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Riley, for the first time addressing the table, remarked quietly of the second of these, 'It's an odd thing about eyes, that they usually come in sets!'—a comment which did not, as I remember, strike Mr James as being funny."

Is it the Street or the Gutter?

VIVIAN SHAW

A MORALIST IN THE ARMY

THREE SOLDIERS. By John Dos Passos. 12mo. 433 pages. George H. Doran Company. \$2.

NUNC demum redit animus. . . . Pauci, ut ita dixerim, non modo aliorum, sed etiam nostri superstites sumus; exemptis e media vita tot annis, quibus iuvenes ad senectutem. . . . per silentium venimus."

For those of us who are not in Leavenworth *senectutem* is a little strong. During several years we were silenced right enough, but the war is over and we are not all middle-aged yet. If there were still any doubt about its being over, the Doran publication of this book about the army by Mr Dos Passos should settle the question. Other people here have dared to cock an eye at the old monster; Mr Dos Passos inspects him composedly and at his leisure. He shows that there is no longer any reason for American books about the war being worse than books about other things.

He writes much about private soldiers, and very little about officers whom he treats as a species of wild animal, distinct from mankind. What he tells of the officers has distressed Mr Coningsby Dawson but it is not particularly atrocious; it was no secret except in the newspapers. It is not for what they did after becoming officers that he judges them, it is for having allowed themselves to become officers in the first place. Charitable or uncharitable, they put themselves outside human consideration; at a time of public misfortune they sold themselves to the engine of misfortune. This may seem an odd notion to-day, but in 1917 when the war was expected to last five or ten years longer, it was not unusual. Suppose when ever you saw a man with a piece of metal attached to his shoulder, your liver turned over, your eyes stared into his, and your right hand flew to your hat brim at an angle of approximately 45°. Suppose that although a good soldier (most were) you had never quite got the nobility of it all into your thick head. You might very well have learned to dislike men with metal on their shoulders and you would have decided either to become one yourself as quickly as pos-

sible or you would have said with Mr Dos Passos' hero: they'll never make that sort of monkey out of me. Certainly there were a surprising number of soldiers, educated and uneducated, who refused all chances of promotion, who insisted on retaining, in the face of "all these pompous words: detachment, battalion, commanding officer," the decent status of an individual in the soup. And it is from their point of view that this story is written.

Like novels by Zola or Frank Norris, *Three Soldiers* is frankly a book with a thesis; it is planned in divisions: Making the Mould, The Metal Cools, Machines, Rust. Three principal characters and a multitude of minor ones are seen through the process. Fuselli is perhaps the most clearly drawn; docile, stupid, with a pathetic desire to make good, to keep in right, swallowing whatever his superiors choose to tell him, asking "where do you get that stuff?" of a man who says that the Germans notified hospitals before bombarding them, he is the typical parrot who was everywhere. Chrisfield from Indiana talks like a Southerner and "doesn't give a hoot in hell what they do." Of the details of army life we are spared only what the publisher was obliged to spare us. At intervals of six or seven pages a paragraph orients the reader in all five senses; then vividly and often beautifully an abominable little adventure in routine is presented. Somebody is seasick, gets drunk, takes a swim in the river; men drill, men desert, disobey orders and get away with it or do not get away with it; girls oblige; officers and Y men trail a more poignant humiliation across the scene. It is done with descriptive flourishes but without sarcasm. The author does not need to be ironical. He sits still, and the unforgettable idiocy of everybody in sight supplies the irony:

"As he was leaving the hut (after a Y. M. C. A. movie of German atrocities) pressed in a tight stream of soldiers moving towards the door, Andrews heard a man say:

'I never raped a woman in my life, but by God, I'm going to. I'd give a lot to rape some of those goddam German women.'

'I hate 'em too,' came another voice, 'men, women, children and unborn children. They're either jackasses or full of the lust for power like their rulers are, to let themselves be governed by a bunch of warlords like that.'

'Ah'd lahk te capture a German officer an' make him shine ma

boots an' then shoot him dead,' said Chris to Andrews as they walked down the long row towards their barracks.

'You would?'

'But Ah'd a damn side rather shoot somebody else Ah know,' went on Chris intensely. 'Don't stay far from here either. An' Ah'll do it too, if he don't let off pickin' on me.' "

John Andrews, the third soldier, is an educated young man, who like almost all educated young Americans thinks and feels in terms of foreign literature (in this case Flaubert). The last third of the book is devoted mostly to his experiences in Paris, still a soldier but studying at the Sorbonne. Women, or the shadows which serve as women in the mind of a young man (Geneviève Rod begins to exist towards the end) enter the story. The bootlicking intrigues necessary to getting loose from the rusty machine, irrevocably turn his stomach. He deserts, throws away his uniform, and finally gets caught by M. P.'s with automatic pistols who presumably beat him to a pulp and see him to Leavenworth for twenty years. If the book had ended with an appeal for contributions to get him out of jail, contributions would have been forthcoming.

In comparison with the first part of the book, however, this last third seems nightmarish, almost allegorical, a return to the more sentimental manner of *One Man's Initiation*. What makes *Three Soldiers* so indubitably count is its story of the army, its concentration of the rancours of countless individuals into something not at all mean or plaintive, the harmonious expression of a well-chewed rage.

W. C. BLUM

BRIEFER MENTION

QUIET INTERIOR, by E. B. C. Jones (12mo, 285 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2) is a first novel of exceptional subtlety, delicacy, and quiet strength. The author writes in the tone of Forster's *Howards End*, but with such an overflowing of emotion that the book becomes thoroughly her own. There is, also, a tendency to end chapters in the rhythms of Mr Conrad's prose. Miss Jones has written a book with decency and without supplying the least subject for publicity—an achievement in itself, but bettered by the skill and command of her composition. Among first novels it is easily the most distinguished of many seasons.

GREEN APPLE HARVEST, by Sheila Kaye-Smith (12mo, 312 pages; Dutton: \$2) perhaps the most flawless of her novels, is the story of a Sussex youth, driven mad by women and Methodism, who oscillates between jail and the pulpit, and who ends pathetically in a horse pond. Miss Kaye-Smith has cultivated one field till its yield has become monotonously perfect. Characters and situations from her earlier books are beginning to sprout up again; it is almost time for her to broaden her field.

THE THIRTEEN TRAVELLERS, by Hugh Walpole (12mo, 279 pages; Doran: \$2). Mr Walpole paints his characters well, yet his situations are not always convincing; he explains a vast amount, yet often leaves the prime essential unexplained; his stories would perhaps be more successful if divested of action and presented simply as character studies.

GOLD SHOD, by Newton Fuessle (12mo, 243 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2) is divided somewhat artificially into three parts; the Strings, the Brass, the Wood-Wind. After a thin and awkward prelude, the author blares forth with more assurance in describing the hero's amours and successful business career. But he is so intent upon discounting this success by his plea for the baffled artist within the triumphant automobile manufacturer that he fails to give either theme the emphasis of actuality. The writing is at times tersely vigorous but is often trite and forced, and one seldom escapes the sense of a very self-conscious orchestration.

FOR ME ALONE, by André Corthis, translated by Frederic Taber Cooper (12mo, 267 pages; Stokes: \$1.90) has unfortunately been hailed by the *London Times* as a second *Madame Bovary*. It has also been awarded the *Grand Prix du Roman* for 1920. The concatenation of two such terrific events is sufficient to make the judicious sceptical. But for once the goose has laid the golden egg. M Corthis' novel is a psychological study of such extreme subtlety and power, and its translation sounds so nearly like original English, that the reader's delight in Mr Cooper's craftsmanship is matched only by his pleasure in coming into the presence of a heroine who lives a convincing and moving drama without having to commit adultery, murder, or suicide.

BRASS: A NOVEL OF MARRIAGE, by Charles G. Norris (12mo, 452 pages;

Dutton: \$2) is a detailed account of how unhappy married people often are when they are not happy. Neither adorning his platitude with any visible ecstasy of manner, nor pointing his tale with sharp and illuminating gestures, the author of *Salt* tells this second story with the gravid exuberance of Dreiser.

PAN, by Knut Hamsun, translated by W. W. Worster (12mo, 202 pages;

Knopf: \$2) is an arcadian interlude to the symphonic soil-poems of the Norwegian. The ostensible autobiography of a hermit who falls in love with a sophisticated hamadryad, it is structurally weakened by the cadence which the author tacks on at the end. As a study in moods it is chiefly interesting in that its melodies are formed almost entirely of overtones. The author, winner of the Nobel prize for 1920, is given a panegyric introduction by Edwin Björkman.

ORPHAN DINAH, by Eden Phillpotts (12mo, 433 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50)

is an invitation to the Dartmoor country to display its "Welcome Home" banner. After philandering with fantasies and murder mysteries, Mr Phillpotts is back in the fertile soil of his major successes, soberly unfolding a solid and deliberate tale. As usual, he erects a theme which has to be walked round and round by everybody, as if it were a newly unveiled statue in a public park, but in the end the story emerges from rural bustle and talky animation and stands out clearly defined.

TORCHLIGHT, by Leonie Aminoff (12mo, 365 pages; Dutton: \$2) flares occa-

sionally and sputters through interminable chatter. It is designed as the initial volume of a Napoleonic cycle, wherein affairs of state are constantly being halted in order that pretty ladies may "fervently admire," "affectionately stare at," and otherwise adore their own ankles. The style is flowery; the conversation is all of a pattern; the significance of the historical setting rarely emerges with sufficient force to reach the reader's consciousness. The book is inscribed to the author's twin sister and her three little daughters, "who have taken a flattering interest in the work."

MOGENS AND OTHER STORIES, by Jens Peter Jacobsen, translated by Anna

Grabow (16mo, 150 pages; Nicholas L. Brown: \$1.50). A collection of four stories, the first and longest of which is much after the manner of Theodor Storm. Mogens, who is one of nature's gentlemen, sees her hiding under a bush, and they finally become engaged. But she is destroyed in a fire, which drives Mogens into some years of riotous living. This, fortunately, is cut short when he meets the right woman; they marry, and the next night we see him stalking about the library: "There was a love, pure and noble, without any coarse, earthly passion; yes, there was, and if there was not, there was going to be one." A few pages further on, however: "My own little wife!" and he lifted her up in his arms and carried her in." The next day, with everything cleared up, "They went out into the freshness of the morning." The closing story suggests with a more convincing freshness a situation which arises between children and a mother when the mother takes another husband.

BABETTE BOMBERLING'S BRIDEGROOMS, by Alice Berend (12mo, 216 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$1.75). This delightfully amusing novel has the sparkle and effervescence of sea-foam, yet occasionally is pierced by rays that illumine the obscure depths of character. Sketchy and superficial as it is, it yet shines with the soft glow of humour as well as with the hard brilliance of wit.

IN THE GARRET, by Carl Van Vechten (12mo, 347 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is a collection of literary and musical essays in the art of historical non-assimilation. The essays are always informing and frequently witty. The dyspeptic pallor of their presentation, however, makes one wish that Mr Van Vechten would come out of his attic.

LORDS OF THE HOUSETOPS, by Carl Van Vechten (12mo, 238 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is an appropriately named and well chosen collection of cat stories, compiled by the author of *The Tiger in the House*. The thirteen tales—some well known, others practically unknown—show the cat in as many different aspects, best summed up, perhaps, in the words of one of the human characters: "Cats do what they like, not what you want them to do." Mr Van Vechten contributes an illuminating preface discussing the stories.

SAVITRI AND OTHER WOMEN, by Marjorie Strachey (12mo, 169 pages; Putnam: \$1.75). This is a book of stories freely adapted from the folk-lore of many lands. The tales are told with the naïveté of a child, with the eerie fancy and the poetic abandon of the primitive mind, and at times with the wisdom and the simple dignity of the sage. If they lose in appeal to the sophisticated adult because of their resemblance to children's fairy tales, they are none the less well worth reading because of their imaginative range, their symbolism, and their beauty of expression.

THE HAPPY PRINCE and other tales, by Oscar Wilde, illustrated by Charles Robinson (8vo, 134 pages; Brentano's: \$4) is one of several classics done for children, handsomely done, and with a consciousness that children do not resent classics. Others are *GARGANTUA* (4to; Duffield: \$2.50) the sheets of which, plus the pictures by Adrien Leroy, promise a magnificent book. Jane Porter's *SCOTTISH CHIEFS*, edited by Kate Douglas Wiggin (4to, 504 pages; Scribner's: \$3.50) has colour illustrations by N. C. Wyeth, and reminds one that while grown-ups read Thaddeus of Warsaw, children show a taste for something better.

EDDIE ELEPHANT, by Johnny Gruelle (12mo, unnumbered; Volland: 75¢) and **TALES OF LITTLE DOGS**, by Carrie Jacobs-Bond (12mo, unnumbered; Volland: 75¢) are two slender volumes done with pretty trimmings, with whimsical children and humorous animals disporting themselves over the pages. Mrs Bond's innocuous verses, in which baby slang is made to serve for humour, will nevertheless satisfy a child's enormous craving for rhythm and rhyme. Johnny Gruelle is not so happy with Eddie Elephant as he was with Raggedy Ann, but it is comforting to have invincible goodness rewarded with twenty palm-leaf fans, fifty-seven jelly tarts, ninety-six fluffy doughnuts, and twenty boiled ostrich eggs.

ALADDIN, by Arthur Ransome (8vo, unnumbered; Brentano: \$6) is told in gently satiric and often galloping verse, the old good story remaining better than anything done to it, but coming out of the re-telling with credit to the versifier; the pictures in colour by Mackenzie are particularly entertaining. **THE GOLDEN FLEECE**, by Padraic Colum (12mo, 300 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50) is another of Mr Colum's extraordinary successes in prose, the fourth in his series of classic myths, and at least the eighth of his books for children, not one of which fails of perfect construction, constant humour and seduction of the mind, and lovely English. The pictures are Willy Pogány's, and exhibit his characteristic qualities.

THE ROYAL BOOK OF OZ (8vo, 312 pages; Reilly & Lee: \$2) was compiled and put into book form by Ruth Plumly Thompson from some notes by Mr Baum. Throughout the first half of the book she has admirably maintained the style of the "Royal Historian." Her own style, into which she lapses towards the end, though inferior to Baum's, is not displeasing. The Oz books are something like an inversion of Gulliver's Travels. In *The Voyage to Lilliput* Swift sought to ridicule the petty human follies and incidentally succeeded in amusing thousands of children. Baum, writing with the purpose of amusing children, takes an occasional crack at their parents, but with no sign of either the venom or the genius that characterized the great Dean's work.

THE BLUE FAIRY BOOK, edited by Andrew Lang (illus., 8vo, 303 pages; McKay: \$3.50) and **STORIES ALWAYS NEW**, by Cora Morris (12mo, 197 pages; Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd: \$1.75) bear about the same relation to most of the pretty things concocted for children as a full course dinner to an oyster cocktail. The first is a delightful reprint of the familiar collection. Like the original authors, Lang escaped Pollyannaism and gives us that country "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" unspoiled by unction. Frank Godwin's full page colour illustrations fall short at times, but some of those in black and white are fanciful and vigorous. As far as binding and illustrations are concerned, *Stories Always New* might have been published years ago before imagination and a degree of artistic ability were applied to the making of children's books. But the stories are well selected from American, English, Italian, Belgian, and French sources and told by a professional story teller in prim English but with an ear for the rhythms indispensable to a good yarn.

MY BOOK HOUSE, edited by Olive Beaupré Miller (4to, 6 volumes, 2,500 pages; Book House for Children) is a child's library of stories and poems drawing on all phases of the world's literature, from the Bible to Shakespeare, from ancient times to the present day. Although it is evident that the stories have been chosen with a purpose to make "right" attractive and "wrong" distasteful, they have nothing of the flavour of a Sunday-school paper. The high literary tone maintained throughout the six volumes allows a grown-up to read them to his children without contracting a bad headache. Excellent binding and illustrations combine with intelligent arrangement of the contents to make them one of the most attractive of juvenile libraries.

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY and other Literary Pieces, by Sir James George Fraser (8vo, 319 pages; Macmillan: \$3.40). The scholarly author of *The Golden Bough* turns in the present volume from graver studies to the verdant margins and captivating interludes of a career faithfully devoted to learning. In his eyes the noblest aim of scholarly leisure seems to be to crowd every rift with the crystalline ore of a most delicate prose rhythm. From, say, *Totemism and Exogamy* to *A Visit to Coverley Hall* is a far cry indeed, but one well worth the long halloo. Throughout the reading of these excursions one feels that the author must have murmured to himself softly: "*Où il n'y a pas de la délicatesse, il n'y a pas de la littérature.*"

NATURALISM IN ENGLISH POETRY, by Stopford A. Brooke (12mo, 289 pages; Dutton: \$3). Naturalism, it is obvious, is rather a misnomer when applied to the spirit of manumission which prevailed in English poetry beginning with such men as Young, Thomson, Collins, Gray, and Burns. To be sure, as a result of the French Revolution, a sloughing off of clogging armour ensued, but Naturalism has too positive a meaning for us to-day to evaluate this movement as such. While Stopford Brooke's lecture notes, herein published, are quite readable, they are on the other hand nowise stimulating, nor do they throw open any windows on untilled glebes. There are times, in fact, when the misuse of the term Naturalism is irritating. The lectures were delivered in 1902, when Naturalism had already achieved, if not surpassed, a maturity of definition, owing to the world-wide influence of Dostoevsky and Zola in the novel, Whitman in poetry, and Cézanne in art. And the sheer absurdity of Stopford Brooke's exploitation of this epithet is revealed, precisely, when we find that he includes within its meaning Romanticism, which stood sponsor for mystery and the renaissance of mediaevalism in its day.

AS THE LARKS RISE, by Theodosia Garrison (12mo, 119 pages; Putnam: \$1.75). These verses stir the scalp with the vigour of their rhythms. Like the rhymes of Mr Noyes, they go marching along to music. They have sentiment, but are without passion; the words fall as they may, without charm, chime, or the effect of astonishment. All are agreeable, and a few are not without a certain direct and simple beauty.

HUGH LANE'S LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENT, by Lady Gregory (illus., 8vo, 290 pages; Dutton: \$4). This is the biography of Lady Gregory's nephew, by his aunt, who was fond of him. A great many people, purposes, and operations come between the author and her subject. She thinks of herself, of Mr Yeats, of Mancini, of many others; their letters, portraits, and opinions fill her book, which is the picture of a time rather than the story of a man.

HINTS TO PILGRIMS, by Charles S. Brooks (illus., 8vo, 192 pages; Yale University Press: \$2.50). In this beautifully printed book, Mr Brooks writes about such things as walks in England, toys, authors, lawn-mowers, and the two kings, Zooks and Muffin. . . . He has been compared to Lamb, but the comparison is a bad one. His writing is a play of nervous fancy, of eager and engaging whimsy. It is full of poetic imagery and delicate feeling. But it is never a vehicle for serene thoughts and mellow reflections.

ORACLE, arranged, edited, and introduced by Claude Bragdon (12mo, 64 pages; Manas Press). Unlike "spirit communications" and their material proofs of the immortality of safety razors, these personal oracles have the strength and good sense of the writings of the mystics. The language is at once expressive and touched with the oddness of conversation remembered from a dream. Underlying them all is the old assurance that consciousness alone is important, that the expansion of consciousness is what will change the world. They belong less among the mystical writings which describe a technique of emotional living than among those which induce immediately a mood of receptiveness and convince without argument.

MANHOOD OF HUMANITY: The Science and Art of Human Engineering, by Alfred Korzybski (12mo, 264 pages; Dutton: \$3). Not a few students have interpreted mathematics in terms of human values; this author interprets human values in terms of mathematics. For example, he takes the position that war and revolution are due to the fact that while technological science has advanced by geometrical progression, social science has advanced only by arithmetical progression. The most conspicuous feature of the book is a dimensional analysis of organisms—plants as "chemistry-binding," animals as in addition "space-binding," and man as "time-binding" while possessing the other two characteristics also. The time-binding faculty enables man to make the past live in the present and the present for the future. Thus the author holds that human capacities are "exponential functions of time." Current beliefs and institutions are criticized, and "human engineering," based of course on exact science, is presented as the ideal for the future. The book raises many intricate questions.

THE ENGINEERS AND THE PRICE SYSTEM, by Thorstein Veblen (12mo, 169 pages; Huebsch: \$1.50) is a series of papers in which Jeremiah, tongue in cheek, flays the weaknesses of the present industrial system, going behind the word to the fact which it obscures. If he could do as much for his own argument the book would be invaluable, but when it comes to the Soviet of Technicians wielding their limitless powers with an eye single to the common weal, irony, originality, and "perspicacious learning" all desert him. Questions as to the workability of the proposed change are slurred over, and the casual observation that the new masters will be "self-selected" is thought sufficient for that hoary problem. Certain phrases like "the underlying population" and "Vested Interests" occur too often and too complacently even for the purposes of irony. One feels that the thinker has been swallowed alive by the propagandist.

SOCIAL DECAY AND REGENERATION, by R. Austin Freeman, with an Introduction by Havelock Ellis (8vo, 345 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5) predicts the probable collapse of Western civilization through the operation of four "social anti-bodies": the domination of man by mechanism; collectivism, or socialism; the progressive increase of the population; and the survival and relative increase of the unfit. The chief emphasis is laid on the unhappy effects of the power-machine on the human environment and on man himself. As a means of checking these tendencies the author advocates the voluntary segregation of the fit in self-supporting communities.

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

OUT in Chicago, underneath a green and white marquee, there sits a composer. Our thoughts wander his way not unoften. Especially when we see, all over Europe, the black bole of the musical tree shrill again with young green: group of six tum-ti-tumming it joyously upon the banks of Seine; young school in Poland, very delicate, very elegant, and not too wishy-warshau; Spanish music kicking out alive and tough and stiff underneath de Falla's hand; disciples about Schoenberg opening dark sayings upon the harp; especially then, when we hear all these new musics from overseas, does our thought strike suddenly in the direction of John Alden Carpenter's.

A turn of the sort, a sudden conversion of the impulse received from *outré-mer* into an examination of not merely Carpenter, but of the local condition in general, is a process fairly normal, one would say, to the minds of most of the younger American workers. The members of the new generation do not, as a rule, go long without furtively casting the eye inward. Every throb of life which debauched old Europe even in her stews manages to communicate, impels them to attack again, and worry the hoary problem of native incapacities. In Paris, for instance, it is not at all uncommon for young Americans who come from assisting at the performance of a Cocteau ballet or at a concert of the work of the Group of Six, to go sit at a café-table half the night, discussing over the bocks the question why, not Chartes and the Sainte-Chapelle, but things as irresponsible and spontaneous and to-dayish as these Gallic entertainments, cannot be produced t'other side the Atlantic. Evening after evening, over the heads of a bunch of such, arguing and soliloquizing as though they were Russians out of Turgenev, there quivers, like a humming bird stationary on air, mute, rigid, ecstatic, a tiny winged Van Wyck Brooks, and one perceives the sparkling of his keen grey eyes, his grin like a pleased savage's, hears the agitation of his wings. Wherever two or three of the musical persuasion are met together, whether in Europe or over here at home, like as not they will fall a-wondering why life doesn't turn itself into music in the New World, where water contains as much the elixir of art as it does

in the Old, and where men stalk about on their hind legs, too. There are instruments here, and people to play upon them, and others who will go hear performances. There is the art of Europe to serve as tradition. We'd like much to find a composer here who furnishes us with solid matter into which we could bite with all the jaw. We need composers; men to express themselves and us in music; it's no longer a matter of decoration.

And then, your pondering music-lovers will turn in a sort of frenzy, and search the native field once more. "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." It must be some one real has been overlooked. It must be an injustice has been done to an American composer merely because he is an American. Jamesesque sentiment of herd-inferiority has caused men to see Europe and her music-makers through stained-glass spectacles. Why should not an American composer be as able as a Frenchman or Pole or Viennese to seize upon the elements of existence and transmute them to music? There must be, on these shores, at this very moment, two or three native-born musicians of creative audition. It is then, however, that the mind finds the man of the striped awnings in Chicago; and dissuaded from further inquisitiveness, stands stunned.

Of the workers at play in the field of American music, none, we are assured, were self-realization a possibility for the native-born composer, would stand more directly in the way of success than John Alden Carpenter. It is for that reason our thought goes direct to him. Other personalities in the field are, it may be, inherently finer, warmer, more thoroughly sympathetic. There are several one respects more both as human beings and as potential fountains of music. But the Chicagoan's resources are co-ordinated to a degree approximated by no other young American composer. Neither Engel, Powell, Morris, nor any of our other hopefuls have themselves as well in hand as has he. Without denying for an instant that a course in composition under some great magister would help him from the root up, one can still aver that among all the foetuses in the arcana, he is the nearest birth. And at forty-five years of age even an American artist is fullgrown. At moments, particularly in the second movement of the concertino, with its five-eight beat, its extended swing, its travelling-salesman sort of life, Carpenter's music crosses the line that separates the unborn from the born and is clothed in the colours of existence. The man has even attained a

certain liberation of fantasy. He toys engagingly with his orchestra. The piano is remarkably well treated as an instrument of percussion in the concertino. Indeed, the work exhibits a keen sensibility to the qualities of the various pieces of the battery: kettle-drums, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, castanets and glockenspiel—demonstrates the sensitivity of the composer's epidermis. Aquatints wash charmingly across the orchestra of the Perambulator suite; the scene of the mock bullfight in *The Birthday of the Infanta* is brilliant with its trumpet passages.

But with these gifts Carpenter has succeeded in producing chiefly some comfortable music. His forms are not so much the very objects of emotion as means of suggesting emotion about something not stated. The *lento grazioso* of the concertino is, after all, a very exceptional passage in a body of work that scarcely ever permits one to experience. The suite *In a Perambulator*, for example, is not so much the world of the child felt directly as it is the adult comment on the sensations of the baby carriage. You have but to compare it with *The Children's Corner* of Debussy and *Ma mère l'oye* of Ravel to perceive its pseudo-realism. The two Frenchmen managed to coincide intuitively with the child. The American, with all his charming talent for light orchestration, his wit and musical good manners, causes us more to smile at a world made miniature and playfully ironic than feel the terror, the buzz and glow of the universe of the nursery. Nor does Carpenter's ballet, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, after the fairy story of Oscar Wilde, express the *limbus infantiorum* in which the composer and so many of his co-workers find themselves, and put us in touch with a reality. It was indubitably the portal out of his own world of fantasy which the action of the ballet opened to him, that drew the composer to the subject. For to have realized indeed a musical atmosphere for the scene of the dim Escorial, the monstrous etiquette hedging about the royal child, the immense hoopskirts on the slim young body, the toy bullfight, the grotesque capers of the impassioned dwarf, the entire strange little subterranean world, would have been, in a fashion, to objectify himself. But, even here, Carpenter showed how almost impossible it is for him to perform an act of imagination. The music is not the expression of the composer's sensations and ideas. It does not pierce out from some hidden centre. One feels it has been "made" rather self-consciously. This is music as decoration. On

the whole, it is pleasant enough, but not exciting to the mind. One rather likes the dreamy dances of the first scene and the burlesque *tauromachia*; one rather dislikes the close of that scene, where the dwarf decides to make his way into the palace, the interlude, and all the rest of the business where Carpenter seeks to be dramatic and passionate. That is all. It seems unfortunately as though the way lay entirely clear for the qualification of Franz Schrecker as the composer of the only Birthday of the Infanta. John Alden Carpenter, after all, remains a musical embryo, man-sized, but nevertheless an embryo.

His very words re-enforce the impression given by his music. When the work was produced in its original form in Chicago in 1916, he wrote:

"The Concertino is, in effect, a light-hearted conversation between piano and orchestra—as between two friends who have travelled different paths and become a little garrulous over their separate experiences. The rules of polite talk, as always, between friends, are not strictly observed—often, in animated moments they talk both at once, each hearing only what he says himself. Presently the moment comes, as always, between friends, when no conversation is necessary—a relaxed moment, when Friendship itself takes them in hand, and they have nothing to say."

Is that not the tone by which Carpenter can be known among the musicians? Bach, one knows, loved music as though it were the angel of deliverance and death. Beethoven loved it as though it were the spirit of liberty, present, like Leonore in that Florestan, in the dungeon of mankind. And Chopin loved music as though it were a luxurious mistress riding him to death; and Schumann worshipped it with a sort of sweet calf-love all his life, long after he had gotten beyond the age of seventeen; and Brahms, as though it were a woman whom he might never possess, for all his great adoration, because she was the wife of another. But with John Alden Carpenter, we are in the realm of friendship. The rules of politeness are not strictly observed, and "there is still so much that presses to be said—on a pleasant night—between friends."

So on that day we read no further in the book. The case too clearly throws into light the stone wall against which in the effort

to disentangle himself the American composer bruises his breast, to permit further illusion. It makes us feel again something we all know within us, knew all the while foreign enterprise made us revolt against it, and hope to prove it untrue. And we perceive again that no native born musician can yet give us what dozens of Europeans do. We perceive that no American composer can yet perform a feat of imagination in music. For an act of imagination is the process of perceiving an objective verity, and no one born this side the Atlantic can stand looking long into the face of the truth. Why it is so, why the truth, hard to envisage in the Old World, should be a sort of head of Medusa in the New, it is not easy to say. Perhaps it is for the reason that the verity concerning America itself, the prime truth for the American, is so painful that sluggish life prefers to maintain itself on a low plane by means of a moral blindness rather than struggle desperately and perhaps perish on a higher. Perhaps it is for the reason that no individual can see the realities unsustained by the will of the group. One knows it oneself, whatever one be, the pain of gazing long at the truth concerning oneself; the glare of the fierce light, the constantly recurrent impulse to glance away immediately after the vision into some consoling roseland, to cuddle oneself with the chocolate and movies and newspaper patriotism of the eternal illusion. It's as if the breast were sore, and couldn't long bear the embrace of life, and relaxing the passionate clasp shrank away. The art of Arthur B. Davies, after all, is the typically American.

No doubt, some are steeling themselves for the contact, thanks largely to Brooks and his fellows, trying doggedly to bear the pain. But it will be long before they become very strong at it. And of the artists, the musicians will be the last to learn. Music is the fundamental art. In a renaissance that begins painfully *à rebours*, it must of necessity be the last to live again.

PAUL ROSENFELD

THE THEATRE

MR JOLSON has returned and those in foreign parts will envy us and wonder whether he is as good as he ever was. He is. In a show with all of the old tricks and some better new things to the credit of Mr Watson Barratt, Mr Jolson sublimely lives. His daemon attends. He is ageless and radiant and terrible. Having heard all the technical and lay criticisms of Mr Jolson, I can only say that I have found no other entertainer in America who can add exaltation to enjoyment. He is all we have of the *commedia dell'arte* and something ought to be done to stop his silly curtain speech about this being his last season.

FOR the first time in fifteen years I know what Gordon Craig meant by printing in every issue of *The Mask* I ever saw the statement that the theatre must be destroyed. Departing from *THE CIRCLE* nothing seemed so obvious. Because this play, as produced here, is really what our theatre is tending to; it is the "best" play with the "best" cast. Ten days of meditation softens the decree. It is necessary to destroy not the theatre but the audience. Mr Somerset Maugham, Heaven knows, was vulgar enough—in the sense that beginning with fine comedy he steadily wrote it down and down, so that the lowest intelligence could not fail to see every point. (Trumping your partner's ace at bridge, swallowing false teeth, and breathing down someone else's back, are a few of his tricks. The obviousness and stupidity of his conversations, the total lack of mental fineness, the broadening of every broad thing and the failure to sharpen anything, are the methods.) But there is this to be said: Mr Maugham, setting before us two saddened and disintegrated outcasts of society made them bad enough and Mr John Drew and Mrs Leslie Carter did nothing to soften his blows. Yet at every moment when the tragedy of their lives was manifest, when their very humours should have made strong men weep, the audience fastened on the transparent hokum of the incidents and roared its delight. Miss Estelle Winwood, with an intelligence of our own time struggling among the aborigines of the theatre—I refer not to ages but to acting—was so right, so tidy, so instinctively a propriety, that every movement and intonation remains alive in memory.

THE CIRCLE has been published for all to read by Doran. Lennox Robinson's THE WHITEHEADED BOY has also appeared in print (Putnam) and although we do not agree with Mr Ernest Boyd, who wrote the introduction, that Mr Robinson's narrative comments instead of stage directions are a success, we find the play good reading. (Why, incidentally, should Geoghegan always appear as "Geog." when there is a full line for the name?) Structurally the play is remarkable, because as each act ends there seems no reason for another act to follow. And as each act begins one sees the reason in the rich humour and in the comedy scenes (after Moliere) which fill the play. Miss Maire O'Neill played the clever aunt, making her a grotesque and not a caricature; Mr Arthur Sinclair is one of those rare actors who can be effectively silent on the stage, who can not-listen; and Arthur Shields, we have it on the best authority, was finely Irish. To me the best of the acting was that done by the rest of the company, sitting about dejectedly while their fates were being decided and establishing reality with a nod of the head.

BLUEBEARD'S EIGHTH WIFE is, in one act, more than entertaining and in the rest sufficient. Miss Ina Claire and Mr Barry Baxter are both a bit better than in their last appearances here; Mr Edmund Breese ought to be given his head and allowed to burlesque his character entirely instead of only half-way.

THE SILVER FOX is bright but not brilliant; it is skilfully put together and Miss Violet Kemble Cooper looks lovely in yellow. Lawrence Grossmith and William Faversham are the other principals. In acting, therefore, and in playwriting, this piece scores over THE CIRCLE. The box-office remains to be consulted.

THE Theatre Guild's first production of the season was an American play, AMBUSH, by Arthur Richman. It is a thoroughly derivative play, and one wonders whether an American institution would not be doing a greater service to American writers by producing original European work than by wasting its unquestioned talents on the morsels left half-warm on the plates of a score of dramatic Caesars.

G. S.

COMMENT

WE have not seen the full list of seventy-nine names which M Charles Cestre has chosen as representative of American literature. Our interest in the affair is due to a notably bright letter written by Mr Theodore Dreiser to The Daily News of St Paul, Minnesota. From this we gather that M Cestre, in his function of head of the department of American Literature and Civilization (the name gives pause and has Mr Harold Stearns been consulted?) at the Sorbonne, prepared such a list. The services of five Americans increased the number of the culled and chosen to three hundred and forty-two, and if Mr Dreiser isn't being romantic, the names of Eleanor H. Porter and Harold Bell Wright are on it while "such distinguished novelists" (says Mr Dreiser) as Henry B. Fuller, Stephen French Whitman, Brand Whitlock, and Hervey White, are omitted. To paraphrase: My dear Mr Dreiser!

Yet this is not the gravamen (no other word will do) of Mr Dreiser's letter. What he, personally, has to complain of, and that most bitterly, comes out in the following:

"Where, for instance is [the name] of Laura Jean Libby, the author of 872 separate and distinct American romances? . . . And Bertha M. Clay? . . . And the author of 'Thou Shalt Not' and one hundred other thrilling American romances. . . . And then Mr George Barr McCutcheon of 'Graustark' fame. And that man who wrote 'When Knighthood Was in Flower.' Am I to believe that the French and Europe are not to hear of those as representative of us? For shame! Abas somebody. Rather than this should be I will gladly resign my place on the list to make room. . . . The French and every other nation should certainly know us as we are—at our best, as it were."

This is really good and entertaining and as a journal which thinks that bad work should always be called bad work and moderately good work should never by any chance be called great, we ought to approve of it. But we fall out of sympathy on one point which is Mr Dreiser's perverted jingoism. If Mr Dreiser really knew European

publications, instead of limiting himself to European literature, he would not make the provincial mistake of thinking that America is alone in producing Bertha Clays; nor would he think it necessary to add them to a list of representative American writers. An Englishman aware of Nat Gould and Marie Corelli, of Ethel M. Dell and Florence Barclay, would understand perfectly; it is so long since we travelled in a *wagon-lit* that we have forgotten the names of the French and German, the Swiss and Spanish counterparts. But they exist—as surely as Americans exist who are too humiliated by their own literature to realize that our badness differs in kind and not in degree from the badness of others. Our vulgar literature is suitable to our conditions and although we have cornered everything else we share our human vulgarity with the world.

STILL, as the typesetter made Mr Dreiser say, Abas somebody, or as the magnificent Mr Dooley put it, Abase! Shall it be *The Liberator* or *The Saturday Evening Post*? A mellow patriotism pervades the offices of the former journal, a gentle hundred percentness, and in a contributed article *THE DIAL* is given it over the knuckles for printing the works of a number of French, English, and German writers. The point has been made before but not by the organs of internationalism. We can only reassert our intention to publish the best work we can find regardless of its country of origin; we are not assessing custom duties but publishing a journal of art and letters.

As for *The Saturday Evening Post*, let us quote one of its most cherished contributors:

"That fear, along with the behavior which became from that night thenceforward part and parcel of him, made Dudley Stackpole as one set over and put apart from his fellows. Neither by daytime nor by nighttime was he thereafter to know darkness. Never again was he to see the twilight fall or face the blackness which comes before the dawning or take his rest in the cloaking, kindly void and nothingness of the midnight. Before the dusk of evening came, in midafternoon sometimes, of stormy and briefened winter days, or in the full radiance of the sun's sinking in the summertime, he was within doors lighting the lights which would keep the darkness beyond his portals and hold at bay a gathering gloom into which from window or door he would not look and dared not look."

These cadences we have heard before; they are the marks of "fine writing," no doubt, but the proof readers of the Post must have wondered what the devil they were doing in that galley. We have seen in the first paragraph of a cabled news story in the New York Times a simile as complicated as that of the pagoda in The Golden Bowl, and wondered. Is it possible that the common literature of our day is forsaking the direct simplicity which made it if nothing else intelligible and, with an instinct for these things, is beginning to give us exactly the wrong thing in style and an initiation to bad poems in prose? Or is this what the press considers its mission as popularizer of the arts?

A YEAR ago when we were moved to words by the imminence of Children's Book Week we suggested that children might be allowed to read anything their elders found interesting. In *La Vie en Fleur* THE DIAL began last month a continuation of a story of childhood which is certain to be immortal. In an earlier volume the author has discussed the question of books for children and has decided from his own experience that books written expressly for children are not enough. "They perceive, as soon as they have read a page or two, that the author has endeavoured to enter into their world instead of transporting them into his own; and they realize in consequence that they cannot, under his guidance, expect to find a means of gratifying that passion for the novel and the unknown which animates mankind at every age." Anatole France gave children selections from The Odyssey and himself began reading Don Quixote as soon as he could read at all. Our own book was an illustrated and no doubt expurgated Rabelais, the rediscovery of which, many years later, as a classic was a shock of pure joy. Lemuel Gulliver was, to our mind, a more entertaining companion than Little Lord Fauntleroy. And it is probable enough that no book written to edify, instruct, or annoy the young has ever done anything but harm. Those which are honestly written because the authors love to write them are good; and that there are quite a number of them each year we are reasonably certain.

TWELVE poems by Wallace Stevens in Poetry for October afford one the best single chance one has had of estimating this *farouche* author.

